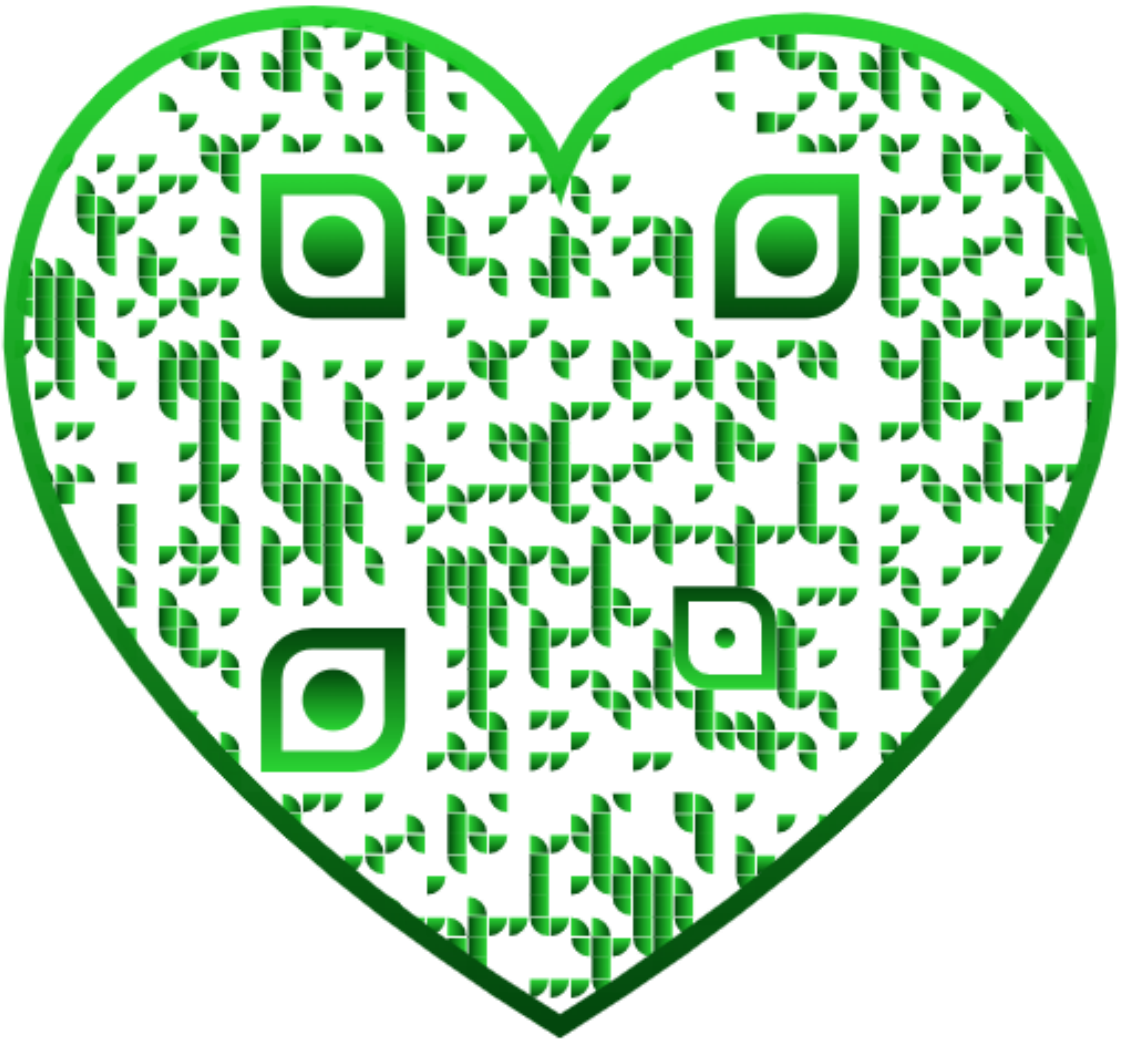
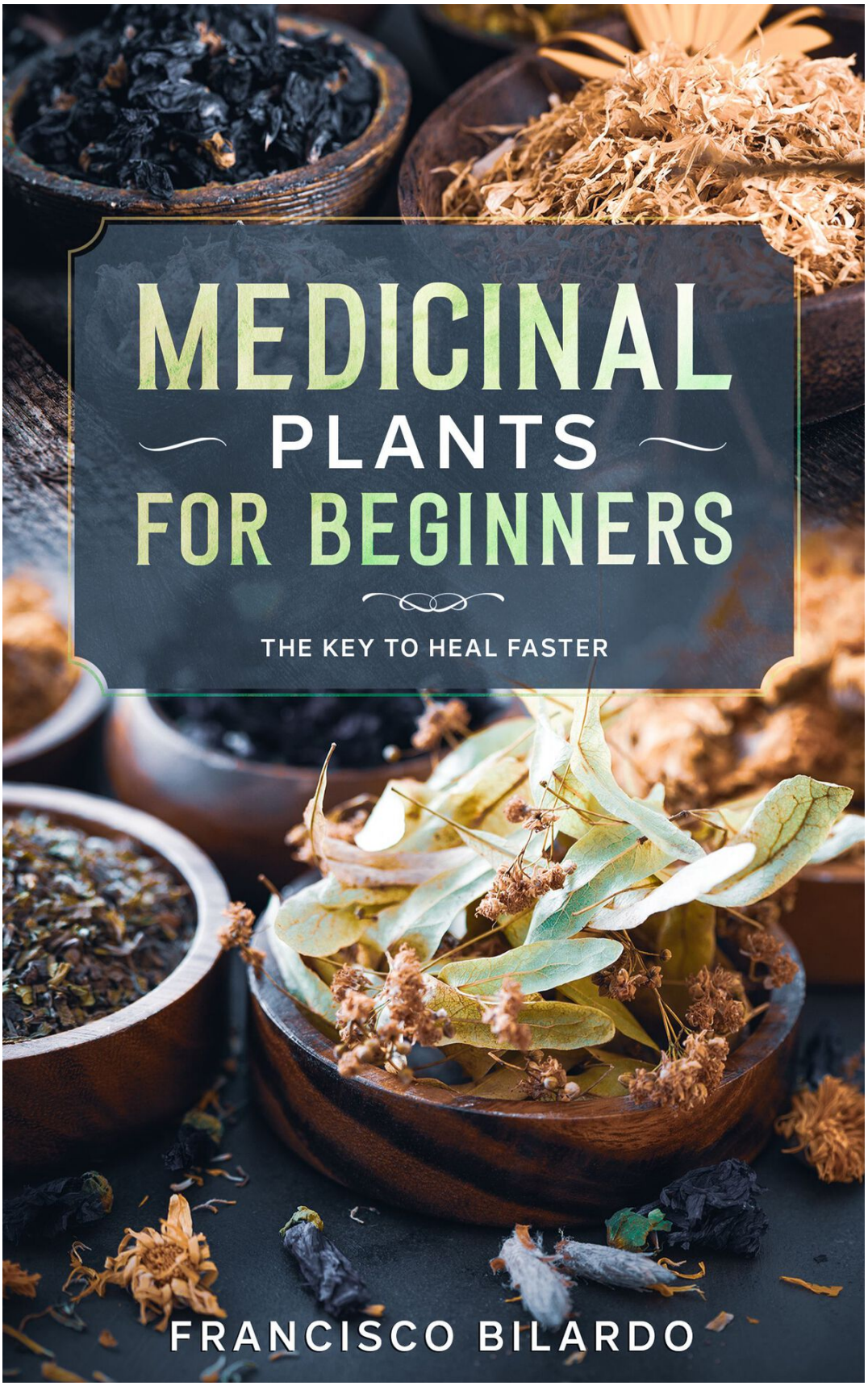
MEDICINAL
PLANTS
FOR BEGINNERS
THE KEY TO HEAL FASTER
FRANCISCO BILARDO

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Medicinal Plants
for Beginners

A practical reference guide for more than 200 herbs and remedies for common diseases.

Francisco Bilardo

Credits

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Introduction

The book that you, dear reader, have in your hands was conceived with the purpose of teaching you all the aspects related to medicinal plants. Understanding that the world in which we live represents, through Mother Nature, endless therapeutic options for the healing of our organism, I have decided to put at your disposal a significant amount of new knowledge that will allow you to lead a much healthier life with a 100% natural approach. After a long trajectory through different latitudes, obtaining new information, I have come to the conclusion that nature holds the vital secret for our bodies to be healed without too much exposure to the risks and side effects of drugs that are now being sold in droves by the big muscle of the pharmaceutical industry.

As an herbalist, I have devoted much of my life to discovering the effects of medicinal plants on all living organisms. My full confidence in nature comes after having understood how these resources provided by nature, through their different properties and composition, have the strength to alleviate discomfort of different types. Contrary to popular belief, the plant kingdom has an unquestionable importance in the field of medicine. Even today, that there seems to be some stigmatization on the part of medical specialists with the use of medicinal plants, these herbs are increasingly applied in pharmacology, where hundreds of new drugs based on elements or particles found in the plant kingdom are produced daily.

However, despite the skepticism of many specialists, the research that has taken place in recent decades has only confirmed something that many of us have already known for some time: medicinal plants are a solid basis for the healing and rehabilitation of human beings. As a reader,

with this book you will understand why plants are increasingly necessary in any therapeutic treatment and how their properties are able to ensure the well-being of people.

All the chapters in this book have been carefully written, taking into consideration the target audience. In addition, the structure of the book facilitates a progressive knowledge of all those aspects related to medicinal plants and their proper use on a daily basis.

In the first chapter, you will join me on a dizzying and didactic walk through the years of the history of medicinal plants. You will be a timeless witness to how great emperors, doctors and philosophers of different generations have attested, through their chronicles, to the healing properties that Mother Nature offers us through her resources and her plant kingdom. Pioneering protagonists of what is now considered modern medicine (Hippocrates, among the most important) highlighted the importance of medicinal plants in their treatises. The purpose of this first chapter is for you as a reader to learn that natural medicines are not an invention of current times, but that since time immemorial they have been recognized as a totally efficient therapeutic possibility.

The second chapter is focused on providing you with a significant base of new knowledge related to medicinal plants, their properties and the benefits associated with each of them. The importance of these natural medicines on the heart and circulatory system; on the digestive system; and on the nervous system, among others. In this chapter, entitled *Properties and Benefits of Medicinal Plants* , I provide you with a list of 20 specific and highly functional medicinal plants, along with the scenarios in which you should apply them. In the third chapter, entitled *The*

Appropriate Use of Medicinal Plants , I will show you how important it is to carry out all the processes properly so that the effects of medicinal plants are not lost along the way. In addition, you will find some recommendations to make your relationship with Mother Nature go far beyond its corrective and curative use.

The fourth chapter, on the other hand, is a compendium of home remedies that I put at your disposal so that you can learn all about home remedies with medicinal plants. In addition, a list of healing recipes that will be of great help in your daily routine. I think it is appropriate to note that all the information referred to in this chapter reinforces what was said in the rest of the *corpus* of the book: sharing with you all the knowledge I have acquired during my various journeys. As indicated in the book of this project, this is just a practical reference guide to keep in mind when recovering the health and well-being of your body.

The fifth chapter, following this order of ideas, seeks to teach you the origin of all these medicinal plants that from today will remedy your body and your mind, protecting you from common diseases. *Where did plants originally come from and where to get them?* is a defining chapter because it will give you a concrete idea of how some of those remedies, that are now beginning to acquire special relevance in the health of people, were discovered.

Well-being and your health are, in short, the main motivations that led me to write this book. When we understand that nature offers us so many options, we move forward in terms of quality of life. Common diseases are the order of the day; it is for this reason that I allow myself to refer you this source of new knowledge and recommendations so that you include them in your actions. As a faithful believer in nature (and its medicinal plants), I have proposed that, at the end of this reading, you will have

developed two neuralgic aspects that will allow you to achieve optimal health.

These two aspects are:

- Self-consciousness about your well-being and its importance.
- Knowledge inherent in your well-being.

All these chapters, in sum, constitute a testament of which ramifications aim only and exclusively to give you all the necessary tools to reach the fullness. In this regard, I invite you to read carefully each of the chapters you will read below; I guarantee that from now on your life will take a radical and unprecedented turn.

Chapter 1

History of medicinal plants

In this chapter, I will address the basics so that you can understand what medicinal plants are and what their relevance in today’s medicine is.

There are many questions around this type of plants; some people relate the word "herbs" to misconceptions and wrong ideas.

My intention is that you can have a more real approach to what medicinal plants are, so welcome to chapter one.

Healing the body before Big Pharma

Since the beginning of humanity, plants have been used by different cultures as medicinal methods in the face of certain sufferings. Understanding that every living being that has developed a central nervous system has the possibility of feeling pain, it is logical that civilizations sought palliatives or cures in any element of nature. For thousands of years, plants were protagonists in this quest of the human being to mitigate or overcome pain. All these therapeutic modalities, far from the medicinal approach that prevails today by the force of the pharmaceutical industries, were used by many healers throughout the centuries and by all the civilizations that have existed on the face of the earth until today.

Our ancestors did not have the industrial processes that are at our disposal today in terms of sanitation and healing, so they had to face health problems from their most immediate possibilities. These, of course, came from Mother Nature. The fact that, at present, medicinal plants continue to have a significant number of followers shows, by itself, that it is

not a wrong modality in its fundamental objective: healing. In fact, many of the medications that are widely consumed today, and that have been released to the market by multinational pharmaceuticals, have their raison d'être in some type of plant or come in some way from nature (animal, vegetable or mineral kingdom). This is an irrefutable demonstration of the functioning of plants in the organism.

Why are the properties of certain medicinal plants used within the pharmaceutical industry? All living organisms respond to external properties. In the same way that our body reacts to the consumption of antioxidants or to the excess of foods high in fat, it happens with certain properties present in plants offered by nature. In the interests of health and well-being, the human being has turned to all the resources at his disposal. The difference lies in what type of elements are used. While big pharmaceuticals produce drugs based on synthetic or creative drugs, natural medicine bases its protocols solely and exclusively on plants and derivatives. But at what point did society stop using medicinal plants as a first option in the face of health problems? Before answering this question, I think it appropriate to delve a bit into the history of medicinal plants.

The heritage of our ancestors

History and archaeology have made important finds dating back several millennia before the arrival of Christ. One of the oldest evidences of the use of plants from a healing perspective came from India. Specifically from a slab that was found in the city of Nagpur. After the respective analyses, it was determined that the slab is approximately 5000 years old. But what did the specialists find in this slab? It is one of the most important events in the history of medicine: twelve recipes for the preparation of different

medicines through the use of 250 different types of plants. Just to mention a few, the poppy, mandrake and henbane stand out.

There is also ancient literature that shows the importance of nature, specifically plants, in its use as medicine by our ancestors. One of the most outstanding examples in this regard is the book Pen T'Sao by Emperor Shen Nung (2500 BC). While it is true that this book is one of the most important landmarks in the historiography of natural medicine, it is only one of the vast list of written evidence that accounts for the early use of plants as healing tools by people.

The sacred books of Hinduism (known worldwide as the Vedas) mention various healing treatments with plants. A good percentage of the spices and plants we know today in the Western world have their origin, precisely, in India. The Vedas are also the oldest mystical texts or spiritual books ever found by archaeologists and historians of the world. The oldest of these Vedas was written approximately between 1200 and 700 B.C.

The Ebers papyrus is another of the most representative examples of how plants contributed to the health and healing of civilizations long before our present. This papyrus, dated around 1550 B.C., from ancient Egypt and the 18th dynasty, contains a collection close to a thousand proscriptions referring to more than 700 species of plants used in various treatments. Some of the plants referred to in the Ebers papyrus are: garlic, bun, castor oil, coriander, centaur, among others.

The most exciting thing about this papyrus is its structure and content. The latter deals, in essence, with medical and surgical topics, in addition to referring to notions about the anatomy of the human body. The ancestors, according to

this papyrus, used different sources as medical treatments to treat specific symptoms. Much is said about this in the Ebers papyrus. Substances of animal and plant origin were the raw material of all medicines for ancient Egypt. Some of the animal substances mentioned in the papyrus are: bile, liver, dry stool. Among the plants, the most used were ebony, saffron, rose, myrrh and even lily.

The Bible, the most important mystical and religious text of the West, also refers to the use of plants from a therapeutic approach. The most mentioned in it: incense. The Homeric epics, believed to have been created in 800 B.C., are another of the most important historical documents that record the medicinal use of plants. There is a reference to approximately 60 species of plants from different cultures such as the Mycenaean and Egyptian Assyrian. Multiple investigations in this regard allowed historians to conclude that, to cite one concrete example, our ancestors used Artemisia plants as an energy restorer, in addition to its use from prevention to the health of individuals.

The master of medical sciences, Hippocrates (459-370 BC), in his works, makes various references to 300 types of medicinal plants, explaining their physiological function in the organism. Many of his writings are quite emphatic in this regard, explaining the use of wormwood and common centaury in cases of febrile patients. Hippocrates also refers to the use of garlic in cases of intestinal parasites as well as mandrake and opium in their narcotic function.

All these references come to form a wide and unquestionable source of bibliographic references where specialists so different from each other, by knowledge and chronology, as Herodotus, Hippocrates, Homer or emperor Shen Nung, through their chronicles, intended to leave a historical legacy of absolute transcendence in the medical world.

Dioscorides, on the other hand, as early as the first century, referred to the healing potentiality of more than 300 species of herbs, emphasizing their properties and how they interacted with the very nature of the human body. What is impressive about Dioscorides' work is that it remained in force until about 1500 years after his death. Later, his work would be expanded with the contribution from medieval Islamic Hellenism.

Continuing with the historical evidence, it would be unfair not to concede a place in this project to Theophrastus, disciple first of Plato and then of Aristotle. This philosopher is recognized as the father of botany, which he described at length in his two most important works: *De historia plantraum* y *De causis plantarum* . In fact, these two projects (consisting of eighteen volumes) represent the most important contribution of ancient botany to the Renaissance. In this immense project, Theophrastus classified more than 500 species of medicinal plants, much of all the plants known at the time. All the considerations found in these treatises give Theophrastus the epithet of the father of botany.

Aulus Celsus, contemporary physician with Theophrastus, in his treatise *De re medica* , cites approximately 250 species of medicinal plants, including pepper, cinnamon, poppy, aloe, among others. The significance of all these writings lies in their estimated dates. In the case of Celsus' work, all these bibliographic references remind us, among many things, that medicine has always been present in people’s lives. Our ancestors, and theirs, had to face ailments and diseases. To believe that everyone who got sick ended up dying is, by all accounts, unthinkable.

Pharmacology and medicinal plants

It is important, before starting, that every drug (at least for pharmacology) is understood to be a chemical compound with a specific chemical structure. Because of this structure, the drug has specific properties, these are divided into:

a) Chemical properties.
b) Biological properties.

But what is the relationship between pharmacology and medicinal plants?

The (historical, proven) fact that the resources coming from the plant kingdom were the spinal cord of the therapeutic processes used by our ancestors in all pre-Renaissance civilizations should not be omitted. For that;;, it is enough to go to a public library and browse through the history of medicine shelves. Long before the medical sciences developed vaccines, surgical treatments, diagnostic tests and novel designer drugs, the oil extracted from oregano was used as a digestive and for its antibacterial properties; to cite just one of the endless examples documented by teachers of different eras.

However, I believe that the development of pharmacology gave a blow of authority on the table. The use of chemical processes to isolate the active principles of plants was one of the most impressive advances in modern history.

Since its establishment, pharmacology and medicinal plants have developed a total synergy, based on a common objective: people’s well-being. A pharmacologist is understood to be a specialist who, through a series of studies, determines the functionality of certain elements in the human or animal body. In contemporary medicine, the cure is inconceivable without the presence of pharmacology and its various applications in the life of any living being. While it is true that we cannot deny the advances of science (and with it, pharmacology) in contemporary medicine, I

consider it pertinent to define that this was not always the case. All historiographical studies confirm the healing of people through different methods and substances long before pharmacology became a specialty derived from medicine.

All historical records precede the universal proliferation of pharmacology, which had its golden moment in the late 18th century, through the proliferation of botany and organic chemistry respectively. It was the rapid development of organic chemistry that formed the basis of what is now known as pharmacology. This is because it was through this medical origin that chemistry facilitated the isolation of the active principles of plants. From this moment in history, pharmacology is one of the pillars in the creation of medicines and curative therapies for the human being.

However, it is known that drugs ultimately come from nature. The classification of these is established from the kingdom of origin.

- Mineral drugs: these are substances in their most basic form. These include sulfur, salts (magnesium sulfate), iodine, iron, acids of various types, potassium, sodium chloride or calcium.
- Animal drugs: This includes all drugs that have been formed from the animal kingdom. Generally, animal organs in the form of dried powder. Among the most common examples are thyroid powder and liver extract. From the latter, active elements such as insulin or L-tyrosine are obtained.
- Plant drugs: in this case, practically all parts of a plant are usable in medical terms. Stems, leaves, roots, flowers, fruits, among others. Ingredients such as

morphine, acetylsalicylic acid, strychnine or the alkaloid galantamine. Many of these elements will be dealt with in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

- Synthetic drugs: Also called “designer drugs”, these are characterized by having their raison d'être in laboratories. All of its ingredients or elements come from a series of chemical processes. In other words, these are obtained by total synthesis. Structurally, they have no relation to the various kingdoms of nature.

At present, things have not changed much in this regard: laboratories continue to profit from the wonderful healing power of certain plants, in different ways: either through the use of the entire plant or through the isolation of its healing particles from a chemical process called hemisynthesis, which works on the basis of a digital molecule.

There are thousands of possible examples to explain why the use of medicinal plants has been indispensable throughout history as much as now. The pharmaceutical industry has made a great effort to enhance its work in medicine, although to the detriment of little or no recognition of the role that medicinal plants have had in its growth. However, every day, in different parts of the world, many investigations are carried out to continue discovering new properties and principles of plant origin. Hence the importance of understanding that any stigmatization related to the use of medicinal plants arises from ignorance or blind prejudice.

All these investigations have an immediate consequence: the use of medicinal plants in large pharmacological projects is becoming more and more frequent, to end up being commercialized on a large scale in all the latitudes of the planet. These processes can be carried out in different ways, but the result is always the use of large laboratories

to capitalize on all the natural benefits that our ancestors already used for the healing of humanity.

In this regard, I think it is essential to mention two facts that are not minor and that demonstrate how necessary medicinal plants are in the pharmaceutical industry, despite the growing stigmatization of some sectors of society that question its therapeutic and palliative efficiency.

1.
There are 250,000 plant species in the world. However, only the biological and therapeutic properties of 10% are known. That is, 25,000 species officially recognized as medicinal plants for their main active elements and their applicability to the human body. This does not mean that the remaining 90% have no curative elements but that the medical sciences lack sufficient research to verify their functioning and subsequent inclusion in the pharmaceutical market. These numbers are, in a way, encouraging to those of us who believe in the transformative power or medicinal plants in a world increasingly exposed to the toxic consequences or effects of synthetic drugs.
2.
The big challenge facing the pharmaceutical industry today is that, little by little, the options for synthesizing new drugs are running out. It must be said that all the synthetic drugs that dominate the drug market today are due to a series of chemical processes conceived from the different variations of the same family of molecules. These are: prazoles, statins, coxibs and priles. This circumstance has forced the pharmaceutical industry in an obvious direction: to return to medicinal plants and their imposing medicinal capacity. While it is true that this is a complex crossroads, laboratories have had to choose as an immediate solution the rediscovery

of new uses of old molecules such as fluoxetine, thalidomide and clonazepam.

Relevance of plants in ancient medicine

Today, despite the exponential growth of the pharmaceutical industry and its resulting multinationals, plant-based natural medicine continues to be in significant demand across the globe. Every year, millions of people keep intact their beliefs that medicinal plants represent a much healthier alternative for the treatment of certain diseases or ailments.

There are two possible reasons to explain this behavior, especially considering the voracious campaign of the pharmaceutical companies and their resonance at the advertising level. One of the possible reasons is that they fear the (proven) excessive use of synthetic drugs in current medicines. Another possible reason is that, in short, they have personally felt the efficacy of medicinal plants in specific pathologies. It is clear that the high demand may also be due to a hybrid between the two options mentioned above. Whatever the motive, there is no evidence to detract from the healing power of plants in every living thing.

Fifty per cent of the medicines marketed in pharmacies have at least one plant-based component. This is not an insignificant fact because it allows us to infer the transcendence of medicinal plants in the growing creation and distribution of medicines by the pharmaceutical industry. Like the ancient civilizations mentioned here, society today continues to benefit from the healing properties of all medicinal plants provided by nature. For its part, today we have a diverse collection of treatises and records from past times; these bibliographic possibilities are of great help because they represent a testament of teachers on the use of medicinal plans.

While it is true that the use of this type of plants is often stigmatized and questioned, there is an undeniable reality. The number of cases in which the scientific community has confirmed the healing properties of certain plants is superlative. Proof of this is that there is such a high percentage of medicines in modern medicine with at least one herbal component. Adolfo Perez Agusti, in his book *El gran libro de la medicina natural* or The great book of natural medicine, refers to the stigmatization of the use of medicinal plants as follows:

"The omnipotence of the doctor is in decline, as evidenced by the thousands of complaints and demands that are made against them each year, and this is essentially because we have begun to assess only the results and not the medical doctor's academic qualifications. It could also be because we are all now taking responsibility for our health, making our own decisions and administering the recommended treatments according to our instinct or knowledge. This means that every day we are better informed about health issues and although the essential material on body care is not yet in the schools, something that will come very soon, citizens try to read and instruct ourselves".

The legacy of medicinal plants, from antiquity to the present

How were people cured in those days when there were no designer drugs, synthetic drugs, or pharmaceutical companies that produced them en masse? All these chronicles are a very important testimony of how people recovered their health at a time when there were no drugs or medical prescriptions.

However, there are quite illustrative examples.

White Willow Bark

The willow is one of the most striking. Ancient Egyptians used the bark of the willow to relieve pain. This analgesic treatment was mentioned by both Hippocrates and Egyptian doctors of the time. Throughout history, different companies and specialists have tried to overthrow this belief. It was not until 1915 that the giant Bayer, having confirmed its effectiveness, began to sell it around the world. The studies continue: at present, the functionality of the willow bark goes far beyond its analgesic properties, as it has been proven to significantly reduce the risk of bloodshed. Who hasn't cured a terrible headache with the popular acetylsalicylic acid? Well, actually, the famous aspirin is made up of an acid that you get from the bark of the white willow. Amazing, isn't it?

Ginkgo

It's one of the most popular plants in the world of medicinal plants. It is one of the oldest species of trees; the millenary ginkgo is one of the most important plants which medicinal use comes from the Chinese tradition. It is well known that ginkgo has interesting properties in terms of people's brain health. It is, in turn, a protagonist plant in the treatment of patients with mild or moderate dementia. Its use, at present, is recognizable as the most efficient cerebral oxygenator among the great variety offered by Mother Nature. In order to continue delving into its healing properties, current scientific studies focus on the possibility that its components contribute positively to improving the health of diabetic patients or people with bone pathologies.

Evening Primrose Oil

The primula is a plant originally from North America. This flower, of a vibrant yellow color, has properties that have been of great help in different symptoms. Mainly, its popularity is due to the effects to relieve the symptoms of PMS, however, this is not its only utility. Although this plant

has been subject to many studies, all confirm its palliative properties. One of the most recent studies records that primula (or evening primrose, by its Latin name Oenothera biennis and Oenothera lamarkiana) has anti-inflammatory properties; in addition, it has been found to contribute significantly to conditions such as atypical dermatitis and diabetic neuropathy. Other common and proven uses are related to patients with multiple sclerosis. What makes this oil a very important element is its ability to interact with other substances, which increases its appeal to the pharmaceutical community.

Echinacea

The narrow leaf echinacea (or coneflower) is a plant characterized by its beautiful purple petals. However, it is much more than an aesthetic demonstration of nature. Throughout many civilizations in the form of tea or hot drinks, its first consumers were the Native American tribes, who applied it to heal wounds from arrows or snakebites. It is now mainly used as powder supplements. Its most frequent use is as a palliative of common flu symptoms. Today, its properties are still being researched; however there are hundreds of testimonies of its efficacy as a treatment for virus or respiratory infections.

In fact, a quick stroll through your nearest drugstore is enough to discover how important the use of medicinal plants has been in the processing of new drugs for the relief and healing of various diseases. Now, here’s a small (but relevant) sample of the importance of the vegetable world in the medicines that are marketed today with considerable success and credibility throughout the planet. All these molecules come from the plant kingdom and are used today in a huge number of new chemical formulas. I am sure that, on more than one occasion, you have used drugs that contain some of the following molecules:

- Caffeine: as a central nervous system stimulant and even as a respiratory stimulant. Its most common use is as an adjuvant analgesic for acute pain.
- Codeine: one of the most well-known opiates today, codeine is usually used to relieve mild or moderate pain; soma laboratories, in cohesion with other particles, market it for allergic cough.
- Digoxin: used in the treatment of heart conditions such as heart rhythm failure and irregularities.
- Homatropine: mainly applied for spastic colitis, biliary spasms and tympanites.
- Carbenoxolone: its origin is found in the licorice root and is recognized for its anti-inflammatory properties.
- Pilocarpine: although this drug can be applied for different purposes, the most common is to treat glaucoma.
- Podophyllin: this solution, concentrated at 10% or 25%, is marketed as a drug that significantly helps in the treatment of genital warts.
- Aspirin: the analgesic and antipyretic properties of the white willow bark are recognized worldwide.
- Quinine: from the quinine tree, the World Health Organization (WHO) describes the functionality of

this plant as follows: “It is administered intravenously to people with severe or complicated malaria who cannot take medication because they are in a coma or have seizures or vomiting.”

- Metformin: properties associated with insulin resistance. Its application in patients with diabetes is increasing in all countries.
- Ergotamine: applicable in primary migraine treatments for its analgesic properties.

Medicinal plants, the future we need

These are just a few examples that seek to illustrate the importance of plants in modern medicine. Its chemical diversity, coupled with man’s own creations, has meant a real revolution in the field of medicine. Laboratories are well aware of the potential of medicinal plants, mainly from their inclusion to other drugs. If for so long they were the only means to survive or survive various circumstances, it is completely understandable that today heir healing properties are beginning to be taken seriously. Although there are still some groundless prejudices about medicinal plants, it is only a matter of time before arrogance gives in to the true priority: the well-being of all living beings.

If there is one undeniable fact, it is that medicinal plants *cure* . Hundreds of studies are conducted each year to define the functionality of these resources, so that any information or opinion that seeks to contradict this comes from a bias without any foundation. It has been proven, from multiple reliable sources, that there are herbs that fight infections, others with antibacterial, diuretic, digestive and nervine properties, and like that, an endless inventory of options for the human being to mitigate illness and return to the natural state of well-being, optimal health.

The great Chinese tradition, the Pakistani, the Indian; every civilization, from the now extinct to the one that lives today, needs to relieve its pain and heal its body and soul. For centuries, humans lived without drugs; in order to do this, Mother Nature had infinite resources. How was it possible that these civilizations survived viral illness, febrile spasms, wounds, infections, among other obstructions of the health of their people? The truth must overcome all those obstacles born of prejudice. One of the purposes of this book is to contribute precisely to the victory of truth. Likewise, the essential objective of this chapter is to bring you a little closer to the history of medicine and, ultimately, to what our ancestors recorded as medicinal plants.

There were civilizations before the rise of modern medicine and pharmaceutical multinationals. The vast record we inherit from those doctors and philosophers is a more than clear demonstration of how human beings have many alternatives to cure their various ailments or diseases. The influence of all those doctors on what is now considered modern medicine is clearly significant. The good news is that there are indications that allow me to infer that there is a change in people’s judgment on everything related to their own health and how to take care of themselves. A study by Isabel Martinez Solis and Encarna Castillo (*Manual de Fitoterapia* or Phytotherapy Manual) showed the following numbers:

We can get an idea of the consumption of medicinal plants through the results published after carrying out surveys of patients in the field of primary care, 19.6% of them recognize their consumption; in external digestive consultations, 34.7% of those surveyed had used medicinal plants at least once, and in the pre-anesthetic consultations, 35.73% of patients consume some type of medicinal plant. 57% of patients take phytotherapeutic preparations to

replace conventional medical treatment, and 37.5% do so as a supplement to the medical treatment prescribed by their doctor.

So, contrary to what many may believe, the basis of much of the drugs that are now marketed in every drugstore on the planet has at least one plant-based component. The importance of the vegetable world in different therapeutic treatments has been recognized by entities of superlative prestige in recent years. It is no longer just a group of scholars who have proposed to define the validity of the medicinal use of certain plants. The fact that today the plants are used, partially or totally, for the processing and subsequent creation of multiple drugs is a fairly solid demonstration of their efficiency.

Andreas Michalsen, German internist, professor of clinical naturopathy at the Charité University Hospital (Berlin, Germany), in the conclusion of his book *Heilen mit der kraft der natur* (Healing with the force of nature), sets out what he considers to be the future of medicine as follows:

"One goal is to preserve herbal therapies, instead of condemning them to disappear because of over-regulation. The European market is closing its doors precisely to the remedies of traditional medicines (which are often mixtures of various active ingredients), despite their enormous potential. Producers of plant preparations do not have the possibility of patenting them and therefore cannot afford to undertake such costly research programs that are increasingly required by the authorities. That is why it is necessary for the independent bodies to help this sector more".

This represents the purpose of those of us who have devoted much of our lives to accumulate knowledge and certainties in the world of phytotherapy (known in some

countries as herbology). For those of us who share this approach, natural medicine is one of the keys to the future. It is the ideal path for those who aspire to relieve their pain or cure their diseases outside the world of synthetic drugs and their enormous consequences in the human body. The information contained throughout this book is born of a purpose that I have proposed from my passion for natural medicine: to facilitate as much knowledge as possible so that you, as a reader, acquire a new perspective of the world of nature, which is capable of offering us health and well-being at unsuspected levels. Take this chapter as an invitation to delve into the vast and wonderful world of natural medicines.

Chapter 2

Properties and benefits of medicinal plants

The content of this chapter has a specific objective: to bring together all those people who, in one way or another, are interested in knowing everything concerning medicinal plants. The information contained in the following pages is the result of an extensive trajectory in the world of natural medicine. Even a reader who can consider himself a *beginner* will get very useful information in terms of recovery and health. The importance of the vegetable world in today's medicine is immeasurable. More and more people are sticking to natural medicine regimens to cure their illnesses or mitigate their symptoms. Each of the following guidelines points to this.

Today, there are many testimonies of patients who have achieved wonderful results with natural therapeutic treatments. What I seek through this project is precisely that you as a reader and patient understand the functioning of certain medicinal plants in relation to your body. This comes from the understanding of how plants interact in the human body, from its healing properties. While it is true that all living things are different from each other, there is a common denominator among those who have taken natural medicine as a way of life.

What you will get in this chapter is the classification of some medicinal plants according to their function in the body. All the health complications that can arise in the framework of life are contemplated by Mother Nature in various plants. This is without taking into account that even today, despite the unquestionable advance of the exact sciences in terms

of research, not even half of all the plant species that nature offers us in its vast inventory of possibilities have been studied. Many of the plants mentioned here have already been properly researched; most, even, are part of some of the most popular drugs that are marketed day after day in large pharmaceutical chains.

As I explained in the previous chapter, chemistry and pharmacology have taken on the task of using natural plants in their various pharmaceutical processing protocols. Either through the isolation of one of its particles or in the general use of the plant, adjusting them to its different standards and approaches to bring them to the universal market.

In fact, it can be confidently said that Mother Nature has offered her resources for a myriad of processes that today encompass almost the totality of life itself. If we move away for a moment from the approach that concerns us here (the health and well-being of all living beings that make life on the planet), then we would have to talk about the different industrial processes that would not have existed without the presence of the plant kingdom. One of the most illustrative examples is the use of starch or sweet potato in the manufacture of plastics or fibers. Turpentine, on the other hand, is used in the manufacture of varnishes. There are also *carob* gum (Prosopis) and *brea* (Caesalpinioideae), used to add heat and flavor to food or other mass-produced products such as toothpaste, perfumery or cosmetics.

So plants, over the years, have acquired special prominence in different types of use. However, the most important is the one given within the framework of people’s health and well-being. The points to be addressed in this chapter are, in essence, the properties and benefits of medicinal plants at different points in the human body. For example, what can help us solve inconveniences in our digestive system? In our

hearts? Which medicinal plants have the ideal properties to treat metabolic or endocrine disorders? No matter if you consider yourself a beginner of the subject, it is always necessary to have natural options to protect our life.

Medicinal plants to treat your heart

In recent years it has been determined that all those diseases related to the heart and the circulatory system represent the number one cause of death in the whole planet. According to a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO), 31% of all recorded deaths in the world are heart-related diseases. This report found that about 17 million people died in 2015 alone.

The heart is the most important organ of the human body, as any deficiency in this aspect puts at risk the functioning of all the remaining organs. This is due, in essence, to the fact that the heart is the muscle trained for the distribution of blood, among other vital tasks. The most common pathologies are:

1. Heart attack.
2. High blood pressure.
3. Tonsillitis.
4. Atherothrombosis.
5. Triglycerides.

In general, the most frequent causes that evolve into these pathologies are: abdominal obesity, cholesterol, blood pressure, fasting plasma glucose or hypertriglyceridemia. Now, there are many reasons to trust in natural medicine

when it comes to pathologies associated with the heart. All the testimonies studied in recent years show a high percentage of effectiveness in the use of medicinal plants to treat hypertension, atherosclerosis or to regulate triglyceride and cholesterol levels in blood.

Have you ever thought about how much you can improve your triglyceride levels through the use of medicinal plants instead of those expensive synthetic drugs that are marketed by large pharmacies? If you haven't, it's time for you to do it. Now, the first thing is to have a balanced and healthy diet. It has been shown that maintaining adequate levels of triglycerides and cholesterol is sufficient with a healthy diet and low in fat content along with moderate physical activity or exercise. Sometimes this is not enough. Genetic factors come into play here. Whatever your situation, Mother Nature offers very effective alternatives to treat these pathologies.

Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)

Dandelion is an original plant of the Iberian Peninsula, where it blooms in mid-May. All the elements of this plant are usable. Dandelion is considered by many as an annoying plant, which does not stop growing in gardens and lawns. For centuries, this plant has been used for various purposes such as: acne, physical ailments, liver diseases and digestive disorders.

Properties: As for its properties, dandelion leaves contain flavonoids (antioxidant), coumarins (substance used for the creation of medicines that prevent and treat blood clots and blood vessels), vitamins B and C.

In the root of the dandelion we can found, in addition, resin and inulin (the latter is a type of carbohydrate that favors the nutrition of the intestinal flora). Dandelion is also a plant rich in potassium, a mineral that favors diuresis, which

makes this plant a great diuretic balancer. As is well known, fluid retention is one of the conditions associated with heart problems. In addition, it has been shown that the interaction between this plant and elements such as calcium or magnesium greatly benefit the excitability of the heart, which is fundamental in the process of myocardial stimulation. This set of properties acquires much importance in therapeutic treatments for the heart, mainly when we seek to avoid pulse irregularities or cardiac deficiencies.

Garlic (Allium sativum)

Garlic is a plant of Asian origin that can be found in any corner of the world today. Its cylindrical leaves, its bulb of about 50 centimeters or those white leaves are recognizable in any country, regardless of our nationality or culture. While it is true that garlic has been recognized worldwide as a delicious culinary element, it also has a number of medicinal properties that can be applied as a therapeutic treatment for heart-associated pathologies.

Garlic is a great natural choice to facilitate blood circulation. This is because garlic is rich in vitamin B, an essential element to reduce homocysteine levels. Homocysteine is the enemy to fight, as it hardens the blood vessels. This, in turn, has very complex consequences such as thrombosis or coronary pathologies.

Properties: among the most popular properties of garlic are: antiaterosclerotic and antihypertensive. However, its medicinal properties go much further.

- Antioxidant property: The elements that make up the bulb of garlic improve the activity of antioxidant enzymes. It prevents low-intensity lipoproteins from falling into a process called oxidation due to free radicals.

- Antimicrobial property: In cohesion with the above, each element of the garlic bulb brings with it countless benefits. In this case I mean that these components have antifungal, antiviral and antiparasitic properties.
- Anticancer property: One of the most amazing features of the garlic bulb is that it has cytotoxic properties that inhibit the development of tumors and carcinogenesis.
- Antithrombotic property: From a preventive approach, garlic has been used to prevent thrombosis. The reason? Ajoene and its other sulfur elements inhibit calcium reuptake in platelets. In addition, it minimizes platelet adhesion.

In conclusion, there are many good reasons to use garlic as a medicinal plant. This wonderful oriental plant relieves gas, is good for digestion and is rejuvenating, stimulates sexual energy, relieves joint pain, is anti-rheumatic; is used for dry cough, is effective for headache caused by sinusitis and ear pain. All these characteristics, however, are the opener of this medicinal plant which research has concluded very effective in the treatment of heart disease.

Soybean (Glycine max)

Recently, a team of researchers from the University of Toronto, Canada, supported the importance of soy as an effective treatment for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases of various types. However, soy is estimated to offer benefits in many ways. Both in the aesthetic field (taking into account its antioxidant and moisturizing force for the skin) and in general health aspects. We have all consumed some type of soy-derived food, but have we been aware of

all its properties? Or, in other words, how can soy benefit our heart?

Soy helps lower blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels. As a result, it reduces the risk of developing serious coronary heart disease. It has been shown, in this sense, that its consumption helps hypertensive patients to regulate their blood pressure. So, supported by various scientific studies, soy is a fundamental ally to protect your heart from different pathologies.

Properties: In terms of its chemical composition, soy has a high proportion of lipids, proteins and carbohydrates. Soy, in turn, is rich in protein and necessary fatty acids such as Omega 3 and Omega 6. In addition, it has few saturated fats. Its low glycemic index is the reason why its intake is highly recommended in obese or diabetic patients.

The health of the heart depends on each one of us

The heart is a vital organ which mission is to boost the blood so that it circulates through the blood vessels and can reach the entire body. Heart beats vary depending on age; diabetics, obese people, and those who live a sedentary life are very likely to have heart problems. These heart diseases are caused by nervous tensions, chronic diseases (especially those of an infectious nature), abuse of tobacco, alcohol, coffee and other drugs. This suggests that the application of these medicinal plants is not enough to guarantee our cardiac well-being; it is important, likewise, to take care of our diet, perform physical exercise every certain time and avoid the use of substances such as cigarettes and excess alcohol.

Medicinal plants to care for the digestive system

The digestive system is one of the most important devices of the human body. Many of the diseases associated with the digestive system come from bad eating practices, habits or hereditary genetic characteristics. In any of these cases, there are many natural options to treat each of these pathologies. The pharmaceutical industry has taken many of the medicinal plants that I will refer to below for the preparation and formulation of different drugs that today encompass a significant part of the commercial activity of this industry.

Some of the most common diseases or situations in the digestive system are:

- Inflammation of the stomach: many times, the stage of digestion is disturbed, causing a very long pause of food in the stomach. This can even lead to decomposition, in consequence: more widespread diseases today such as Gastritis. The main cause of this type of disorder are the errors and abuses that are committed while eating and drinking, as well as bad combinations and excess condiments, which produce stomach fermentations such as indigestion, colic, feeling of fullness, among others.
- Stomach ulcers: These are wounds produced in the inner part of the stomach and which greatest danger is the perforation of this organ with risk of death. They are usually the result of poorly treated gastritis, consumption of very cold drinks, alcohol or tobacco abuse.
- Diarrhea: These are too frequent and semi-liquid stools. These can be caused by several reasons:

infections, intestinal fermentation, poisoning, liver diseases, among others.

- Constipation: Only a part of the food that we consume daily is taken advantage of or assimilated by our body. The remainder is made up of residual materials. This digestive condition is caused by unnatural eating, refined products, poor in green vegetables, lack of physical activity, liver disease or nerve disturbances. Constipation usually causes headache, lack of appetite, skin rashes, among other conditions.
- Parasites and worms are introduced into the body with contaminated food and water. Another way of access takes place when we allow our pets to lick us.
- Liver disorders: If you consider that the liver is that small grand that performs functions such as producing bile to take advantage of fat and vitamins from food and the destruction of toxins and harmful substances entering the body, it’s understandable how important it is to maintain a healthy liver. In general, liver disorders are caused by the abuse of alcoholic beverages, animal fats, irritating seasonings or nervous disorders.

Flax (linum usitatissimum)

Flax is one of the most effective and popular plants in the world for the treatment of problems such as constipation. This fiber is usually grown in cold climates. Flax fiber is obtained from the stem of the plant. One of the main physical characteristics of this plant is fragile and long stem. Although originally from Egypt, its popularity has led to its cultivation in about twenty new countries around the world. Some of these countries are:

- Argentina.
- Brazil.
- Canada.
- France.
- Scotland.
- United States.
- England.
- New Zealand.

Properties: Flaxseeds contain a high protein grade and about 30 and 45% oil. This oil, commonly known as flaxseed oil, is used to regulate cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood. In addition, its mucilage content seeds function as an excellent mechanical laxative, hence its importance to treat constipation in all types of patients. Flax also has lubricating properties. In recent years it has been widely used as an antiseptic, in addition to exerting actions similar to vitamin F.

One of the reasons why flax has become the preferred medicinal plant by everyone to treat constipation is because it is very rich in insoluble fiber; this provides volume and slightly stretches the intestinal walls, causing contractions and bowel movements. Flaxseed is, without a doubt, one of the best natural options for things to flow again inside us.

Common Chamomile (Matricaria recutita)

Who has not tasted chamomile by our parents or grandparents? Chamomile is by far the best known medicinal plant on the globe. But have you ever wondered what the thing about chamomile is? The answer lies, in essence, in its effectiveness for stomach problems such as diarrhea or digestion. Since time immemorial this plant has been used for various therapeutic treatments, but what are the properties that make chamomile such an effective ally?

Properties: Throughout history, it has been determined that common chamomile has anti-inflammatory, spasmolytic and gastric anti-ulcer properties. Studies carried out around this plant have confirmed its effectiveness in treating digestive problems such as diarrhea and indigestion. Chamomile also has antioxidant, antiaggregatory, platelet and anticancer properties against skin tumors. Its oil is another of its great tools; it has been confirmed that this is essential because it is antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral.

These are just some of the properties that make chamomile the most popular medicinal plant across the globe. Some of the other areas of application where chamomile has had significant effects are:

- To treat cold symptoms.
- To treat mild skin conditions.
- To reduce menstrual cramps.
- To reduce inflammation.

Enjoy a healthy stomach.

Having a healthy digestive system is as necessary as breathing. In this sense, I think it is important to note that many times the conditions in it are part of a series of

unhealthy habits that we have included in our daily lives. While it is true that a stomach condition can also have its raison d'être in genetics or inherited characteristics, it doesn’t hurt to take care of ourselves first from food, exercise and an active life.

Here is a small list of the medicinal plants most commonly used today in relation to the stomach and its various conditions:

Digestive plants:

1. Caraway (Carum carvi).
2. Angelica (Angelica Archangelica).
3. Star anise (Illicum verum).
4. Anise (Pimpinella anisum).
5. Lemon verbena (Aloysia triphylla).

Plants that stimulate appetite:

1. Chicory (Cichorium intybus).
2. Common centaury (Centaurium erythraea)
3. Condurango (Marsdenia condurango)
4. Great yellow gentian (Gentiana lutea)
5. Red cinchona (Cinchona pubescens)
6. Marsilea.

Plants to treat ulcers:

1. Blond plantain.
2. Marshmallow.
3. Peppermint.
4. Licorice.
5. Branched plantain.

Plants also take care of your nervous system

One of the great scourges that people are experiencing today is anxiety. The violent dynamics of the day to day, in professional, academic and even social terms, are capable of leaving significant consequences in our minds. Since time immemorial, the different cultures that have lived on this planet have seen the need to provide solutions only found in Mother Nature. Consequences such as insomnia, nervousness and anxiety are the most common nervous system conditions today. In fact, who has not been tempted to seek primary health care for some of the various nervous system-related disorders?

There are endless nervous system disorders that may be undermining your chances of being an optimal, successful, and happy person. Some of the most common are:

- Generalized anxiety disorder.
- Panic disorder.
-

Agoraphobia.

- Social phobias.
- Insomnia.

The world of nature offers us a considerable number of options, all effective and confirmed throughout the history of mankind. Remember that the idea of this chapter is to familiarize yourself with all those medicinal plants that nature provides us and that, for various reasons, you have not had the opportunity to know. Contrary to popular belief, medicinal plants are as effective as any narcotic synthesized from scratch in a laboratory. You only need to know their respective uses and all the properties that, in tune with our body, will give us wonderful results.

Are you ready to learn a lot more about how nature can help you with your nervous system?

Valerian (Valeriana officinalis)

Also known as setwall, this plant is widely known by most people who have gone through difficult times or have been partially overcome by stress. It is one of the most used medicinal plants, having Latin America as the ideal niche. This plant is composed of elements such as: essential oil, valerenic acid, organic acids (benzoic, caffeic, and chlorogenic), alkaloids (valerianine, valerine).

Valerian is sedative, hypnotic and spasmolytic. Hence the success in its use to relax us when we feel that emotions are about to overflow. Who has not felt the need to relax a little during the night in order to stop thinking for a moment about all the circumstances and difficulties of the day to day? Valerian will not only help you sleep better because of its sedative properties. Through some studies, its palliative

effect in terms of processes such as menopause or menstrual problems has also been shown.

Hop (Humulus lupulus)

Hops have been used since time immemorial for various reasons. However at present, once all the elements that compose it are known, this herb is perfect for:

- Relieve menopause symptoms.
- Relieve headaches and hot flashes.
- As a topical painkiller.

Sedative, vulnerary and bacteriostatic are its main properties. Other benefits associated with this medicinal plant are: it benefits rest or sleep, helps to combat anxiety, benefits the nervous and respiratory system, improves digestion and improves skin health.

Maypop (Passiflora incarnata)

This plant is another great ally you should include in your life. If you are one of the people who have a hard time sleeping, who lives overwhelmed by different types of responsibilities or even suffer from some gastrointestinal inconvenience, maypop is a good option for you. Personally, I have corroborated its effectiveness in regaining control of my thoughts and my decisions when nerves take unusual power over me. The most common use of this plant by people is to overcome migraines, insomnia or as a soothing.

Composed of flavonoids (apigenin, luteolin, quercetin and vitexin), in addition to alkaloids (harmaline and harmine), prussic acid, among others, maypop has sedative, hypnotic and spasmolytic properties, as well as peripheral vasodilator. The general recommendation is to use it only in

cases of clear manifestations such as insomnia, palpitations, digestive spasms or anxiety.

10 medicinal plants for an iron health

Nature offers us a multitude of possibilities in terms of therapeutic treatments to improve our health or to prevent diseases. Phytotherapy has medicinal plants that can be of great help in any of the areas that make up your human body. Be it for inflammatory processes, for your reproductive system, genitourinary, dermatological and even to treat endocrine and metabolic disorders. Hence the importance of knowing the functionality of certain plants that, under normal conditions, we would not have as a feasible option.

Now, here are ten medicinal plants for you to have an iron health. All these plants that I will present to you perform healing tasks in the organism of all living beings. Science, through dozens of investigations, has verified the effectiveness of these elements of nature in the framework of various frequent pathologies in human life. So I recommend you to read carefully because I am sure you will find interesting options to add in your daily life. Are you ready? If so, read very carefully and take all the notes you consider relevant so that, in case you need to improve your health, you will know how.

Peppermint (Mentha piperita)

Therapeutic properties: antiseptic, antimigraine, spasmolytic, antifungal, choleretic, carminative.

This plant, also known as mentha balsamea wild, is composed of essential oils, phenolic acids, tannins and triterpenes. It is usually used to treat digestive spasms, flatulence, gastritis, dysmenorrhea, irritable bowel syndrome. It also applies for neuralgia, rheumatism, bronchitis, sinusitis and dental pains. One of the reasons

why mint is so popular is because it can be ingested in many ways, being the most common in drops.

Basil (Ocimum basilicum)

Therapeutic properties: antispasmodic, carminative, anthelmintic.

Basil is composed of essential oils such as linalool, methyl chavicol, estragole and eugenol. In addition, it has caffeic and esculin acid. It is usually applied to treat flatulence, heavy digestion, flatulence or digestive spasms. Basil has also been shown to be effective in relieving cough and asthma; febrile symptoms, to combat acne and to soothe severe headaches. In addition, its effectiveness as an external treatment for wounds has been recognized.

Arnica (Arnica montana)

Therapeutic properties: cardiovascular stimulant, vulnerary (in topical use), antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and analgesic.

Composed of phenols, flavonoids, tannins and arginine. Although it is popularly known for its external application (in the form of ointments, tinctures or infusions) to treat bruises or hematomas, it also has functions from its internal use that I think I should point out. Arnica also has a positive impact on the relief of neural pain, cicatrization and to regulate body temperature in febrile conditions. This plant can be used as ointment, tincture or infusion.

Artichoke (Cynara scolymus)

Therapeutic properties: diet, hypocholesterolemic, choleretic, antioxidant, and diuretic.

Composed of mucilage, pectin, sterols, triterpenic alcohols, steroid saponins, polyphenols, flavonoids and certain enzymes. The artichoke has a flavonoid called luteolin that is very common in other green and yellow plants. This

element has an important hepatoprotective effect, in other words: it improves the health of the liver, restoring damaged tissues. Vitamin A and C also confer an important effect, in this case because of their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory characteristics. Artichoke is commonly used to treat dyspepsia, hepatobiliary dyskinesia, and hypocholesterolemia. However, it is recommended not to use in pregnancy.

Star Anise (Illicium verum)

Therapeutic properties: carminative, expectorant, mucolytic, spasmolytic, antiseptic, estrogenic agonist, diet.

Composed of essential oils, caffeic acid, quinic acid, and various flavonoids, star anise is, without fear of mistake, one of the most popular medicinal plants in the world. While it is true that this plant is best known for its culinary use, it also has significant healing properties. First, it favors the digestive system for its sedative and antispasmodic effect. It also favors in the respiratory system since its anti-inflammatory and expectorant properties help to release the bronchi in pathologies such as bronchitis or asthma.

Cilantro (Coriandrum sativum)

Therapeutic properties: spasmolytic, carminative, bactericidal, fungicidal, antiseptic.

This plant, also known as coriander, helps in digestion; it is a natural diuretic that can be taken if you feel burning when urinating. For this treatment you should prepare a tea with seeds, this makes the urine more alkaline. In addition, it also serves for hives, rashes and dermatitis. Following this order of ideas, its effectiveness has been recognized in the purification of the blood. One of the most important characteristics of cilantro is that you can practically take advantage of every small element of its physical structure.

Leaves, seeds, grains, everything is of great benefit in terms of health and well-being.

Nettle (Urtica dioica)

Therapeutic properties: astringent, diuretic, cholagogue, hypoglycemic, rubefacient, anti-inflammatory and external analgesic.

Nettle is composed of: tannins, phytosterols, ceramides, mucilage, carbohydrates, chlorophyll, vitamin A, C and K. Organic acids, flavonoids, serotonin, among others.

Because of its purifying properties, nettle keeps blood, stomach, kidneys, lungs and the intestinal canal clean and free of impurities, on which your health depends. It is an excellent remedy against hair loss, intestinal ulcers, bleeding, among others. In short, nettle is also used for rheumatism, diabetes, seborrhoeic dermatitis and stomatitis.

Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis)

Therapeutic properties: carminative, choleretic, spasmolytic, mild sedative, antiseptic.

Lemon balm is composed of: essential oils, terpenes, alcohols, tannins, chlorogenic acid, caffeic acid, flavonoids, and uronic mucilages.

This plant, also known as common balm or balm mint, is a compilation of therapeutic possibilities. The infusion of this plant has stimulating and antispasmodic properties; making it a highly effective remedy in nerve palpitations, weakness of the heart, bronchial asthma, stomach cramps and all those disorders that are related to the nervous system. Its most common use is to treat digestive spasms, meteorism, flatulence, diarrhea. In relation to the nervous system: insomnia, anxiety, hypertension and tachycardia.

Ribwort plantain (Plantago lanceolata)

Therapeutic properties: balsamic, astringent, anti-inflammatory, spasmolytic, healing, hypoglycemic, antioxidant, lipid-lowering.

Ribwort plantain is composed of flavonoids, alkaloids, fatty acids, phenolic acid derivatives, iridoid glycosides, terpenoids, and vitamins.

This plant, for its purifying qualities, is excellent for curing diseases produced by accumulations of foreign substances; green juice is effective against pulmonary mucus, also to regulate uric acid and to eliminate impurities in general. However, its greatest popularity lies in being a great ally for humans to fight viral infections. This is due, in synthesis, to its phenolic compounds content.

Wormwood (Artemisia absinthium)

Therapeutic properties: analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, choleretic and vermifuge.

Wormwood stimulates the production of gastric juice, so it is indicated in cases of lack of appetite, slow digestion, constipation, liver diseases and bile ducts. Its boiled leaves, applied hot, significantly calm the pains. Do not forget that this plant has analgesic properties. Among the most common uses related to wormwood are: liver problems, bad breath, intestinal parasites, and menstrual pains. Another wonderful aspect of wormwood is that we can find it in different formats, through infusions of wormwood, or as tinctures, extracts, among others.

Mistletoe (Viscum album)

Properties: hypotensive (administered intravenously), T-lymphocyte stimulant, cytotoxic action, spasmolytic.

Mistletoe is composed of lecithins, caffeic acid derivatives, flavonoids, alkaloids, among other elements. But what is it for?

The curative importance of this plant is in its blood pressure regulating properties. Consequently, it boosts circulation. Its most common use is in the form of injections, and the most recommended cases for use are: to regulate the heart rate, to treat gallstone or hypotension.

Bulb Onion (Allium cepa)

Properties: antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergenic, protective against cancer.

It is indicated in poultice for high fever and seizures; if inhaled or used in drops, it will reduce acute epileptic seizures. In addition, it reduces cholesterol and is a good cardiac tonic. Another of its best-known benefits is the impact on digestive and prebiotic processes. In addition, it is composed of a series of sulfur elements that give it that characteristic flavor and smell so well appreciated in our culinary culture. Another element that makes up its structure is the commonly called "vegetable insulin".

Alfalfa (Medicago sativa)

It is very effective in cleaning toxins from the large intestine; it is also recommended for sciatica. The general recommendation is to take it before bed for arthritis, rheumatism, ulcer and anemia. This Asian plant is has a rich vitamin content, including group B (B1, B3, B5, B6) and vitamins of group C, D, E and P. It’s rich in calcium, potassium, iron and magnesium. Alfalfa has antibacterial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and is a rich source of vegetable proteins. The amazing thing about this plant is that it can be applied in different scenarios: to improve osteoarthritis, as an antipyretic (lower fever), to

prevent hair loss and even to maintain or level blood sugar levels.

Ginger (Zingiber officinale)

Ginger is composed of essential oils, vitamins, antioxidants, amino acids and minerals.

Who hasn’t taken ginger in his life? This plant contains anti-inflammatory properties. It neutralizes toxins and helps in digestion; relieves inflammation of the throat, common cold and sinusitis. An added value is that it can be mixed with honey to improve its flavor without having any direct consequence on its healing properties. It is the best domestic remedy for breathing problems such as cough, stuffy nose and congestion. However, due to its particular taste and smell, moderate consumption is recommended.

Flaxseeds (Linum usitatissimum)

I’ve already given you some information about flax and its so-called flaxseeds. Their efficiency and popularity lead me to add them in this list. These seeds are laxatives, expectorants and decongestants. Just take a flaxseed tea at night and in the morning you will have an easy and fluid evacuation. It will help to drain mucus from the intestine and stomach through the stool. This simple domestic herb relieves constipation, asthma and chronic cough. Personally, it seems to me to be one of the most wonderful plants of all that I have known in my long career. And there have been many.

Blueberry (Vaccinium myrtillus)

Properties: hypoglycemic, astringent, antiseptic, urinary, antiplatelet, anti-inflammatory.

Known by many as a fruit, this plant contains different healing properties with a lot of potential and variety of use in the human body. It has been shown that its constant

consumption prevents degenerative diseases, reduces the risk of cancer, reduces blood pressure and is a great ally in the fight against diabetes. As for its chemical composition: its leaves contain tannins, phenolic acids, benzoic acid derivatives and mineral salts of great importance. From a curative approach, its leaves and fruits are usually used. In short, blueberry has many healing functions but, throughout history, it has been used mainly as a hypoglycemic.

Blue Gum (Eucalyptus globosus Labill)

This wonderful plant is composed of essential oils such as eucalyptol, alpha-pinene, p-cymene, limonene and phellandrene. Additionally, it has tannins and resin. Among the properties that make blue gum an essential medicinal plant are: antiseptic, mucolytic, expectorant, hypoglycemic, anthelmintic, healing and enzymatic inductor properties. Blue gum is used externally to treat eczema, wounds, and vulvovaginitis. Internally, it works to treat respiratory infections and diabetes. It is not recommended for use by pregnant women or children under six years of age. It has also been found to cause side effects such as headaches, contact dermatitis and respiratory depression.

Horehound (Marrubium vulgare L.)

Horehound, also known as white horehound, is a flowering plant. It is composed of a series of interesting elements that bring great benefits to the body. Various studies about this plant have identified, among its chemical components, different types of diterpenes, essential oils, flavonoids, tannins, mucilages and vitamin C. All these elements make horehound a plant that stimulates appetite, in addition to serving as an expectorant, choleretic and diuretic. This plant is commonly used to treat eating disorders such as anorexia; in addition, it has shown great effectiveness to relieve flatulence, dyspepsia and hepatobiliary dyskinesia. I

consider important to mention the contraindications of this plant, among which are: light cardiac arrhythmias. It is recommended not to use it in case of pregnant women and children under 2 years.

Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis L.)

Rosemary is another of the flowering plants that head this list for its great popularity and efficiency in the treatment of certain common diseases. It is composed of phenolic acids, flavonoids, essential oils, diterpenes, triterpenic acids and triterpenic alcohols. All these components make rosemary a plant with high healing properties. But what are these properties? Choleretic, diuretic, spasmolytic, healing, antiseptic, scalp stimulant and expectorant. This plant is widely used to treat biliary dyskinesia, dyspepsia, flatulence, digestive spasms, and dysmenorrhea, among other common pathologies. In its external use, it relieves neuralgia and myalgia. It has also been shown to be very useful for treating superficial wounds, as well as alopecia and seborrhoeic dermatitis.

Thyme (Thymus vulgaris L.)

Thyme, also known as German or garden thyme, is composed as follows: essential oils (thymol, carvacrol, p-cymene, ß-pinene, borneol, linalool, geraniol, and terpineol), triterpenic acids, caffeic acid, rosmarinic acid, flavonoids and tannins. The integration of all these components makes thyme one of the most curative medicinal herbs of all that have been studied to date. Its properties are: carminative, choleretic, antispasmodic, anthelmintic, antiseptic, healing and mucolytic. In addition, it is considered a mild diuretic.

This plant is mostly used to treat intestinal parasites, dyspepsia, diarrhea, cough, bronchitis and pharyngitis. However, in its external use it is applied to treat boils, skin infections, otitis, rhinitis, sinusitis and wounds. It is not

recommended for use in children under 6 years of age or in pregnant women.

Know your options... It’s about your health!

It is completely understandable that, when we feel some discomfort, we go to the nearest pharmacy and buy the analgesic that the pharmacist recommends us. Who hasn’t had to go out at midnight to a drugstore to relieve, even a little, a toothache? These are things that happen to anyone on the face of the earth. But is that pharmacist’s suggestion the best option for your body? It may and may not be; this dichotomy can only be resolved through your knowledge. To the extent that you understand and know your options, you will have a much wider scope for action and will be able to make a more rational decision rather than letting yourself be carried away by incessant pain.

It’s clear that many of the synthetic drugs they sell to us in large drug stores are effective in treating common ailments, but what about the other options? Are you aware of them? This is the crux of the matter, the core point. Hence knowing all your options is as essential as having the number of that pharmacy that has 24-hour service. Your list of options is so vast you wouldn’t believe it. The idea of this chapter is precisely to offer you a series of natural options to alleviate and cure many of the common ailments that afflict you today. Medicinal plants worked for our ancestors and will work for our children; it’s good, after all, to learn a little more about them, don’t you think?

Chapter 3

Proper use of medicinal plants

The core of this book is to offer you new knowledge and recommendations related to your health from a natural approach. Medicinal plants, in this sense, make up the very essence of each of the chapters. Consequently, all the topics discussed throughout these pages seek the same goal: that you are well, that you have a healthy life and that you learn to cure your body of common diseases through the tools provided by Mother Nature. As a faithful believer in the healing power of medicinal plants, I believe that the success of any herbal therapeutic treatment is to give them proper use. This is the chapter you're about to read.

If we take into account that the main thing here is to guarantee your health and well-being, it does not make sense that you accumulate theoretical knowledge about all medicinal plants and their healing properties if you do not have mastery of how to give them a proper use. This is the goal that I have set myself with this chapter: to give you specific guidelines so that you include the healing options that nature provides us with a praxis that is consistent with that goal that goes far beyond identifying the values and characteristics of each plant. It is essential, according to my experience as an herbalist, that you understand the functioning of your body in terms of natural medicine.

Now, if you have carefully read all the information offered in the previous chapter, you will surely have a much clearer notion of what herbs you can include in your daily life as weapons to overcome the common diseases to which every human being is exposed from the very day of his birth. But, as I said earlier, there's no point in storing a great source of technical knowledge if you can't put it into practice. In this

sense, I ask you to read carefully each of the segments that make up this chapter. In this way, you will complement the medical information you have learned in previous chapters.

All this is related, in part, to our connection with nature. She, who has proven to be abundant in every way possible, accompanies us since our first day on this planet. A demonstration of this are the various treatises of philosophers such as Galen or Hippocrates, who inherited from us ample testaments that gave an account of how nature was allied with the human being from time immemorial. Theoretical knowledge, accompanied by empirical evidence, is a guarantee of success.

Are you willing to learn even more? If the answer is yes, I invite you to dive into the following pages, which have been written to serve as a practical reference guide, because your health is my priority. For your health I have traveled countless countries, all kinds of places, in the interest of learning everything concerning the use of plants from a medicinal approach. There are thousands of medicinal herbs; that’s an unquestionable fact, now it is my turn to leave you a transcendental legacy so that you can take care of yourself and the people you care about with all the resources that Mother Nature has put in our soil.

As soon as we are able to open ourselves up to a healthier lifestyle, a path is opened in which we renew our connection with the world around us. A part of this world you will now enter is, of course, our herbal allies.

Medicine is the art of imitating the healing processes of nature. Hippocrates.

7 essential plants for your home, your body and your life.

In the interest of facilitating as much knowledge as possible, and that this reaches you without delay of any kind, I have made a brief selection of the 7 most effective plants of all that have been researched to date. It is clear that it is practically impossible to make a perfect selection, especially considering that there are about 250,000 species of plants properly investigated in the world of natural medicine. However, omitting for a moment that this figure represents only 10% of the total number of options that the plant kingdom makes available to us, I must say that this selection is the consequence of a series of journeys I have made by different nations to strengthen my knowledge on this subject to which I have devoted a significant part of my life.

There is no single, indivisible criterion to define which plants are most effective. I repeat, this selection arises from the research I have carried out in very different countries and cities, culturally and anthropologically. In this sense, the 7 plants that my experience allows me to ensure as essential to your home, your body and your life are:

1. Chamomile: Recently the National Institute of Health (United States) recognized that chamomile infusion significantly helps to combat insomnia. It is also frequently used to relieve headaches and discomfort associated with flu and asthma (the latter, mixed with peppermint).
2. Sage: this plant works in many ways, it’s so valued worldwide for its antibiotic effects, in addition to being rich in antioxidants and to stimulate appetite. On top of that, there are those who claim that sage has a noticeable relaxing effect.
3. Oregano: one of the best natural allies in the fight against bacteria.

4. Chamomile: Due to its diuretic properties, chamomile slows fluid retention and oliguria. In addition, it helps to calm migraines when they have a digestive origin.
5. Dandelion: as mentioned in the previous chapter, dandelion is a great ally to treat disorders in the digestive system and liver diseases. Its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties make this plant one of the most popular in the world.
6. Licorice: one of the hidden jewels that nature has given us; licorice has multiple uses. However, the best known for the number of testimonies and experiences heard, are: liver protection, strengthens the immune system, facilitates the hard way to quit smoking, and reduces body temperature.
7. Peppermint: is one of the most used plants to treat respiratory problems. Diseases such as asthma or bronchitis, to mention the most common. It has also been shown that peppermint can help as a therapeutic treatment in cases related to the digestive system (indigestion, bloating, among others).

Now, have you thought about what is the proper use for each of these medicinal plants? Below, I will give you all the information you need to give the most suitable use to these 7 plants. Remember that the effectiveness of its healing properties goes hand in hand with the way you apply all its elements in your daily life.

Chamomile

How to efficiently use chamomile? Now that science and practice have determined that chamomile is very effective in dealing with various problems in the body, you should have a pretty clear idea of how to use it safely in your

home. What makes chamomile such a special herb is that it can be incorporated in many ways. Topical applications, oils, infusions, among others. These alternatives facilitate decision making. After all, the important thing is to cover all possible fronts and reinforce what is "damaged" in our organism. Although, of course, these methods will depend exclusively on the disease we are facing.

Make the most of its aroma.

Breathing the scent of chamomile through oils and aromatherapy can help to treat a variety of conditions such as sleep anxiety or depression. After all, one of the foundations of our well-being lies in resting properly, providing us with a day of restful sleep. You can use these chamomile oils from a small bottle or jar. Whichever option you choose, use a small atomizer like those products to clean glass. The idea is that you can inhale the aroma so that all the properties of the herb have the desired effect.

A delicious chamomile tea.

In the event that you have inconveniences at the level of your digestive system, the best option is to prepare a delicious chamomile tea. Dried chamomile tea flowers, thanks to their high content of flavonoids and terpenoids, have been shown to help relieve upset stomach. This is mainly due to its anti-inflammatory properties. A study recently published by the National Center for Biotechnological Information (NCBI) confirmed that consuming chamomile tea regularly also helps to relieve the symptoms of the common cold.

Topical applications.

Chamomile oil can also be applied topically. That is, directly on the skin or the space of the body in which you want a healing effect. The effectiveness of this plant is also transferred to the field of external pain and discomfort. It is important that all the essential oils that make up chamomile

are diluted earlier in a carrier oil even before it touches the skin. Another option in terms of topical applications goes with the dilution of 1 or 2 drops of chamomile oil in a body lotion with special emphasis on moisturizing properties.

Compress.

Believe it or not, chamomile can also be applied to a compress. This topical method works especially in the area of pain or discomfort. To create this compress, simply soak a towel in warm water and add 1 or 2 drops of the diluted chamomile oil. Then the compress should be applied at the point where the discomfort is. These can be the back, stomach, some specific muscle and even to relieve a toothache, pressing the compress on the affected part.

Salvia

This plant of Mediterranean origin, widely known in different latitudes of the world, is one of the most popular medicinal herbs according to my experience. Used for medicinal, culinary and cosmetic purposes, sage is the key to overcoming specific conditions. Its anti-inflammatory properties are the reason why it is used today both to relieve muscle aches and to treat rheumatism, arthritis or osteoarthritis. There are many ways to take sage. Everything will depend, of course, on the purpose you pursue with its use. Here are the proper ways to include sage in your life.

Infusions.

The method preferred by most. Infusions are not only simple to prepare but represent an almost total guarantee of positive results. Hence the popularity they have gained in recent years in the commercial world. You don’t have to go too far to know someone who has included sage infusions in their daily habits. Nowadays, many specialist shops or herb shops sell these already prepared infusions. Personally, I

prefer to prepare them on my own, in the quiet of my home. If your idea is to do it personally, it’s easier than you could imagine. Just boil some water. Just as the water reaches the boiling point, add 5 sage leaves to the bowl and allow it to continue boiling for another 15 minutes. The last step is to remove the water from the container and let the liquid rest for about 5 minutes before ingesting it.

Esential oils.

This is an option you should always keep in mind. Due to its anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, healing and analgesic properties, taking advantage of its essential oils can be of great help to relieve physical pain, muscle or joint discomfort, improve acne or treat cellulite. Whatever your case may be, I suggest that you always keep in mind that, since it is an essential oil, you must have all the precautions you deem necessary. Before applying these oils, it is essential that you dilute it in some vegetable oil to avoid irritations.

Capsules.

All specialty stores have countless options for you to ingest different medicinal plants through their capsules. What I recommend is that you consume these sage capsules as a supplement. This is a very practical and interesting option because you can always have with you a bottle of sage capsules to strengthen your health from every possible point of view. However, it is important to understand that any product that has been created through manufacturing processes implies, in turn, a certain risk. If you feel any adverse or unexpected effects at the time of your first intake, stop using it and consult your doctor to rule out any unexpected and negative effects. Another of the tips that I usually repeat until exhaustion is that, when taking any capsule (even if it was purchased in your trusted specialized

store) follow the recommendations offered in the bottle. It’s important to walk on solid ground.

Oregano

Oregano is famous for its healing properties in different latitudes. Like other plants included in this book, the properties of oregano can be exploited in many possible ways. This is what makes this plant one of the most beloved options in many of the countries I’ve had the opportunity to explore. It is worth remembering that, among all the properties of this herb, the most popular are: anti-inflammatory, expectorant, digestive and soothing. Don’t be fooled by the use of oregano in pizzas. Its aroma, yes, is exquisite. But the healing potential of this plant is as much or more surprising than its delicious smell. There are many ways to use it, many of which are associated with specific ailments.

Drops of its essential oils.

Oregano drops are the quintessence of its use. It is the ideal method in most conditions in which this herb has healing power. For example, in case of common cold or flu, it is recommended to add 3 drops of oregano oil in a natural drink (preferably juice) and take it at least once a day, for 3 consecutive days. This method also applies in cases of nasal congestion.

In the case of physical pain, the analgesic properties of oregano act better directly. Who hasn’t applied two drops of oregano to relieve ear pain? It is more than clear that its properties act almost immediately when dealing with mild physical pains.

Oregano oils can also help reduce cellulite. If this is the case, I recommend you to use their essential oils in a body massage. Remember at all times to dilute it before in a vegetable oil so as not to expose your skin to any topical

irritations. Another benefit, although less well known, is against insect bites. This topical method works to reduce inflammation as a result of these bites.

Oregano is also excellent for relieving muscle and joint pain. As you may have noticed, the strength of oregano lies in its essential oils. These are also used to treat dermatological diseases such as psoriasis or eczema. Its chemical composition is a tremendously effective weapon to treat a significant amount of discomfort.

Direct consumption.

Another way to take advantage of its properties (in this case, analgesics) is through direct consumption. But what do I mean by direct consumption? Chewing oregano leaves, or taking them in an infusion, has been shown to help relieve all the symptoms inherent in the menstrual process, especially the physical pains of the lower belly. However, before making any decision about the consumption of this plant, it is important to have the permission of a medical professional. Do not forget that many times people harbor certain allergies that we are not fully aware of. In addition, this is about your life and your health. All precautions are valid.

Contraindications.

- It is recommended to stop its use if you show any adverse effects or an allergic reaction.
- Not recommended for use by pregnant women.
- It is not recommended for use by people who have been diagnosed with anemia.

Basil

Basil has been used for centuries as an optimal natural drug to treat various common diseases. As discussed in the previous chapter, basil can bring many benefits to your

health. It is one of the reference medicinal plants to relieve sore throat, to eliminate acne, to improve all those symptoms inherent in bronchial diseases and even to combat many types of fungi. Its essential oils contain antioxidant elements, which contributes significantly to improve your immune system.

There are many ways to use basil. Here are the most relevant and efficient.

Chew it leaves.

Chewing its dry leaves is a fairly suitable use for areas such as stress, anxiety and nervousness. My suggestion is that you chew basil leaves at least twice a day to reduce stress levels. After all, who has not felt stressed by day-to-day responsibilities? If this is your case, and the synthetic drugs offered by pharmacies have not helped you in this regard, why not try basil? Its aroma will facilitate the process. You can calm your nervous system while adding a very good habit in your daily practices.

Topical use.

Its topical use is ideal when seeking to heal wounds or insect bites. My recommendation is for you to crush dried basil leaves and apply them directly to the affected area. Thus, all inherent properties will do their work, facilitating a quick healing. Its topical use is one of the oldest, precisely because it precedes all the processing that came with the following years. Evidence has shown that its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties will help you significantly to relieve the pain of stings and wounds.

Infusion of basil oil.

Infusions of medicinal plants have gained a good number of followers in recent years. Science has found that drinking a hot drink once in a while helps us to relax greatly. In the case of basil, the benefits go much further, because its

properties will help you deal with small headaches and mild pains. Boil some water with some leaves and take two or three tablespoons per hour. In addition to a delicious aroma and flavor, you will be giving it a proper use by taking advantage of all the healing properties that exist in its leaves and in its essential oils.

Basil capsules.

In specialty stores you can always find capsules of your favorite herbs. If you are looking to strengthen your immune system, improve your digestive processes, or relieve those annoying symptoms of cold and cough, then basil capsules are an unquestionable option. Although there are many options at present, capsules are one of the most practical options because you can consume them frequently, thus complementing your diet while strengthening your health. The essential oils of basil are also included in these presentations to have on hand.

Contraindications.

- It is not recommended for use by pregnant women.
- It is not recommended for use in children without proper supervision by a pediatric specialist.
- Not recommended for use in people in postoperative processes.

Licorice

Yes. It is well known to you, dear reader, that licorice is a plant with a lot of medicinal properties perfect for those who have liver-related conditions or for any process involving angina, laryngitis, asthma and colds. Its chemical composition (triterpenes and flavonoids) make this plant an indisputable weapon to use on the digestive system as a healer of gastric ulcers, in addition to its effects on the respiratory tree.

The main international phytotherapy organizations recommend the consumption of licorice with the appearance of the first digestive symptoms. For example, burning or dyspepsia. They also suggest its use as an adjuvant in the treatment of gastric or duodenal ulcers. But do you have any idea how you can administer this medicinal herb?

Gargling.

One of the most unpleasant common diseases (in terms of physical and social well-being) is halitosis. The good news is that performing licorice gargarisms daily will help you with that small but relevant condition. Gargles can also help you treat mouth ulcers. Liquorice powder, mixed with warm water, is a mixture that you should carry out at least four times a day while the surface symptoms last.

Licorice tea.

Licorice tea is the best choice for those of us who face annoying and uncomfortable sore throat. It is also an improvable alternative in case of upset stomach or menstrual cramps. Whatever your case may be, you should consume your licorice tea while it is still hot. In this way you guarantee excellent results against cold or against respiratory infections.

Direct consumption.

Eating licorice has proven to be a 100 percent functional treatment to overcome infectious conditions, heartburn, high blood pressure and even immune system disorders. Sucking the root of this plant is the most used method to take advantage of its properties. I’m sure it will be of great help to you; just remember what you learned here.

Powdered root.

According to the recommendations issued by the corresponding international bodies, the treatment with

powdered root applies to specific cases: bronchial and cold conditions. This method is also extremely effective for dealing with respiratory conditions or digestive problems.

While it is true that licorice has many elements usable in terms of health and well-being, it is important to note that the excessive consumption of this plant can generate problems such as hypertension or muscle weakness.

Contraindications:

- It is not recommended at all for use by pregnant women.
- It is not recommended to be consumed excessively.
- It is not recommended for use by patients with type II diabetes.
- It is not recommended for use by renal patients.

Peppermint

Peppermint, as you know, is a plant that contains important properties: expectorant, antifungal, decongestant and analgesic. Its composition is characterized by a high load of polyphenolic, phenolic, triterpenes and small amounts of salicylic acid. International commissions (specifically the German commission) approved the use of peppermint to treat gastrointestinal, bile duct and gallbladder difficulties. But what uses does this universally recognized medicinal plant have for its expectorant properties?

Peppermint infusion.

It is most common to use peppermint infusions to treat colds or small colds. In this sense, the process is quite simple: pour a tablespoon of dried peppermint in hot water. Once we have prepared the infusion, it is recommended to take it every 12 hours. Twice a day will be enough to relieve all symptoms related to the cold or common flu. In the event

that we are interested in relieving cough, the recipe is slightly similar, changing only the amount of liquid to take.

Contraindications.

As incredible as it may seem, peppermint infusions are also very effective in dealing with gas, as well as to treat intestinal difficulties. But, apart from this, there are some contraindications such as:

- Insomnia in some people.
- The use of this medicinal plant is not recommended for people suffering from heartburn and gastric reflux.
- It is not recommended for use in pregnant women.

Topical use.

As for its topical use, the steps are: dilute three tablespoons of peppermint in a liter of boiling water. Then, when the water is already cold, use it to wash the affected area.

Dandelion

Every day, the evidence that shows how dandelion participates positively in some processes related to the people's health grows more and more. Its curative properties, widely studied, are essential for those who, like you and me, are faithful believers in natural medicine and, consequently, in Mother Nature. Vitamin A, vitamin K, essential oils, plus a list of essential flavonoids for healing. All these elements, previously analyzed in the previous chapter, make the dandelion a great ally that you will always want to have on hand.

Infusion.

Preparing a dandelion infusion is as simple as soaking its petals and boiling them. The wonderful thing about this method is that you can mix the medicinal properties of this

plant with coffee. Yes, that’s right. It is one more possibility in the vast inventory of options that natural medicine offers us to overcome those common diseases that afflict us day after day.

Salads.

Did you imagine for a moment that you could administer medicinal plants in a salad? Well, you can. These types of salads have gained popularity in recent years. Because of its richness in vitamin C and folic acid, its inclusion in vitamin salads is an unbeatable option to strengthen your health while eating something delicious. Its diuretic properties are another reason to put this novel method of administration into practice. In any case, you’ll be feeding your body a cocktail of healing properties. It’s worth a try, isn’t it?

Contraindications .

Now, it is also necessary to talk about the scenarios where dandelion intake is not recommended.

a) If you suffer from heartburn or reflux: I regret to inform you that this medicinal plant is not for you.
b) If you have stomach ulcers: Different organizations have been very emphatic in determining that dandelion is not compatible with people with stomach ulcers.
c) If you have gallstones: another of the most important contraindications. The dandelion, for its properties, functions as a cholagogue (in simpler words: stimulates the production of bile) so it is totally forbidden to consume it for people who have gallstones.

Knowing your own body is the secret

All administration options are valid if you consider the condition or illness you want to face. As you may have noticed, the properties of all plants can be exploited in many ways. In essence, infusions, drops and concentrated oils form the common denominator when it comes to the administration of medicinal plants. However, the proliferation of specialty stores represents an interesting alternative in terms of well-being and health. Phytotherapy is, today, much more than alternative medicine. The effort of some scientific organizations that have invested all kinds of resources to investigate and confirm the medicinal properties of certain plants is a new opportunity to position natural medicine.

But, even if science is attesting to the effectiveness of these medicinal plants, it is necessary for each of us to take responsibility for our own lives. As we become aware of how these plants positively affect our bodies, we will have a greater ability to discern when it is wise to take them and when it’s not. Although it is true that, in many cases, the contraindications appear by not recommending its use in pregnant women or children under 6 years, these are not the only scenarios. Pre-existing diseases, genetic conditions, and allergies are circumstances to consider when making an appropriate use of medicinal plants. Hence the importance of understanding that health and life are the priority, so any food or medicine that can put these two at risk is clearly one option less.

Mother Nature has provided us with the necessary resources to have a life full of abundance, health and fullness. This is one of the universal truths that no one can refute because, of course, the evidence is unquestionable from every point of view. It is clear that I, as a specialist and a great connoisseur of the world of medicinal plants, can offer you some of my knowledge and give you specific guidelines so

that you do not make mistakes in the intake of any natural medicine, but you have a greater degree of responsibility in the sense that you know your body, your organism.

Along these lines, Adolfo Perez Agusti wrote:

> If we managed to have the same administration systems that exist for medicines, medicinal plants would surely become the best choice for the cure of the sick, the cheapest and the one with least adverse effects. But let's not talk about chimeras in a world in which the drug industry is almost all-powerful (...) Also, now we know with certainty how to get a plant to provoke an immediate action, without having to wait long weeks for the improvement of the patient. The secret is simply to know them and to extract their medicinal principles properly, without forgetting any. Fortunately, recently there is a new phytotherapeutic market that recommends the use of the fresh (live) plant, either in the form of juice or syrup. If time proves the veracity of this logical theory, we are about to banish the dried plant.

The new trends in the world of natural medicine have offered us new tools and alternatives to include plants in our daily lives. However, I think it necessary to tell you that as wonderful as the healing properties of certain plants are, they must be administered with prudence and awareness so that fullness and well-being become your new present.

Chapter 4

Home remedies with medicinal plants and their recipes.

The chapter that you will read below contains a series of information and recommendations that every herbalist must master to ensure their health and well-being. According to the tour we have covered so far, each new chapter is a new opportunity to add value to your life through new knowledge that, personally, I consider of significant importance. Dealing with common diseases with caution and the right elements is a guarantee of well-being. Yes, it is more than clear that all living beings are exposed to certain infections or pathologies; however, this does not mean that we should suffer beyond what is strictly necessary. Knowing about all the medicinal plants provided by Mother Nature is a first step (neuralgic, in addition), but knowing how to make good use of all this theoretical information is even more necessary.

Don’t ever forget that my goal as a specialist is for you to have all the necessary tools to face the common diseases that the simple exercise of living entails. There is not a single person on the face of the earth who is free from inconveniences in his respiratory, immune, circulatory, and other systems. Hence the importance that you not only understand how these medicinal plants work (and, ultimately, the healing properties that we can take advantage of) but that you have the ability to develop your own home remedies. Many times the closest solution to a health problem is in our backyard, have you thought about it? You’d be surprised how accessible nature’s resources are in these times when cities seem to eat it all with their immense concrete structures.

In this sense, the idea of this chapter is to help you identify the most suitable medicinal plants for your common use, as well as teaching you some perfect techniques and strategies so that you can prepare your home remedies yourself through a set of recipes universally tested in different fields of research. But, beyond putting at your disposal some recipes for the creation of home remedies, this is a chapter that aims to give you basic recommendations for your health. In other words, I would like you to take this chapter (and its content, focused on helping you give your well-being the strength of a diamond) as a great advice from a friend. A friend who has spent much of his life researching the advantages and benefits of medicinal plants.

In addition, dear reader, this great advice will be of great use to you as you manage to emerge victorious from all the diseases and affections that are the order of the day. This practical guide has been designed for beginners, that’s right, but it also seeks to awaken awareness in those who have shown a solid and tangible interest in improving each of the aspects that make up their lives. These people, with an awakened mentality and a sense of fullness, are the niche to which all segments of this chapter are directed. Now, are you ready to continue? That’s what I guessed. Welcome, once again.

General recommendations for a healthy life

Health is only the reflection of our habits and thoughts. In other words, what happens in our body is essentially due to our day-to-day actions. For example, a person who has a sedentary life, a diet saturated with fat, bad habits (smoking, alcoholism, drug use), is much more likely to develop heart problems or some type of cancer. It is clear that there are many factors to consider in order to

understand a person’s habits. Elements such as his environment, his sentimental situation or the social or professional pressures he faces come into play here. Whatever the case may be, the truth is that the health of someone with bad habits is a time bomb that can explode anywhere.

These are some of the most harmful risk factors according to all scientific research carried out since the modernization of medicine.

Cancer risk factors.

- Related to personal habits: smoking, alcoholism, unhealthy diet, sedentary lifestyle, morbid obesity or overweight.
- Related to the environment: exposure to UV radiation, passive exposure to tobacco smoke, pesticides.

Respiratory diseases risk factors.

- Inhalation of harmful substances.
- Smoking.
- Obesity.
- Stress.
- Hereditary factors.

Chronic diseases risk factors.

- Sedentary lifestyle.
- Smoking.
- Bad eating habits.

I’ve only highlighted three pathologies because they’re the most common ones, the ones that kill the most people across this planet, our home. However, there are different types of diseases, some more complex than others. In any

case, the individual’s behavior remains his best weapon (and, in many cases, his worst enemy) to lead a full and healthy life.

What I’m trying to tell you through all this information is that prevention is the best way to achieve a full life in terms of health and well-being. Of course, all common diseases will come to us sooner than later. But if you have previously established a series of positive habits, which add value to your life, then it will be much easier to recover the health attacked by those common infections. Preventive activity is a form of treatment that, in general, prepares your body and your mind for the struggles you will face later.

How about an example to illustrate this idea?

The bronchial tubes are the ducts through which the air drawn from the outside circulates and is taken to the lungs for the use of oxygen. *Bronchitis* , by definition, is the inflammation of the mucous membranes of the bronchi; it is a disease of great danger because by hindering the normal circulation of air disturbs oxygenation; it manifests with stinging in the bottom of the throat, decay, more or less intense cough (with or without phlegm), which can cause internal stabbing pains between the chest and back. There is usually fever and if not treated promptly, it can become chronic.

In this regard, Edgar Cayce tells us:

The body disorders must be considered as an opportunity to contemplate us as we are, eternal beings (...) As a consequence of an exaggerated aberrant physiological activity, the disease that we are creating begins to show itself, which is diagnosed when it becomes strong enough to manifest its symptoms. Only then, in most cases, we take certain measures aimed at normalizing the body (...) But to

conform at a conscious level, I must know what I am and what my possibilities are, at least in the field of healing.

Now, a person with healthy habits can cope with this disease through all the relevant treatments. It will only require patience and discipline to follow the instructions to the letter. But what do you think will happen if the person diagnosed has been a constant smoker for years? First, the characteristics of the disease will be more complex in view of the long trajectory of damage to the respiratory system. Second, it will be much more difficult for the patient to stick to the treatment guidelines because they will continue to smoke even when this habit has led to bronchitis. Diseases such as tuberculosis, asthma, hypertension or thrombosis have their origin in that small cylinder of nicotine that many have taken as a habit. So, all preventive actions will not only keep you away from disease, but will serve as a special suit to deal with eventualities when they arrive.

The garden of your house.

As I have pointed out before, when we talk about health the ideal is to have on hand all the possible options. You would be amazed to know that many of the plants that have been studied in this book are available to anyone in our Latin American countries. The unstoppable rise of medicinal plants has meant a paradigm shift in the health sector. One of the reasons to reach this conclusion is that it is increasingly frequent to see an aisle dedicated to medicinal plants in the large pharmacies of the world. Now, how about we eliminate intermediaries once and for all? Why do you have to go to a drugstore if you can grow your own drugs? Or, even better, why wait until a naturopathic laboratory processes, bottle, and market a diuretic, when you have the ability to do so in your own home?

But, before giving you some recommendations for you to learn how to prepare your own home remedies, here are some of the most prodigious herbs and fruits that we almost always have on hand:

- Herbs: onion, garlic, carrot, nettle, dandelion, horsetail, wormwood, plantain, cucumber, tomato, fennel, boldo, chamomile, fig, soy, grapefruit, willow, chard, watercress, squash, radish, flax, pumpkin.
- Fruits: lemon, orange, apple, pineapple, banana.

Medicinal herbs have acquired special importance in recent years. Personally, I've identified two central reasons for this exponential growth that natural medicine has had for some time now.

1. The results of all scientific research that have proven the effectiveness of curative properties in certain diseases and conditions.
2. The ease offered by phytotherapy in terms of the creation of home remedies by each person. This is a significant advantage over drugs synthesized in pharmaceutical laboratories.

While it is true that there is still a long way to go for medicinal plants to be as important and recognized as their transcendence requires, the big steps that have been taken in this regard in recent decades reveal encouraging news for those who, like me, faithfully believe in the healing properties of all plants that have been properly studied so far. Now, many of those plants are within our grasp. Hence the importance of knowing how to ingest them and in which specific cases. Here is a quick list of common diseases and their respective treatments, considering the common medicinal plants in our countries.

Uric acid - Boldo.

This plant, wonderfully effective for the treatment of liver and digestive disorders in general, is the first on the list; boiling its leaves dissolves and removes uric acid. To prepare Boldo tea you only need to add 2 grams of boldo leaves in 250 ml of boiling water. Then, allow the drink to rest for about ten minutes. The proper dosage is one take 2 times a day, just before each meal. Some possible side effects have been identified in boldo tea consumption. These may manifest with vomiting, abdominal pain, or diarrhea.

Sore throat - Ginger.

Sore throat is one of the most common diseases. Many of its causes are represented by external factors such as the environment in which we live. However, it may also be related to bad practices such as unhygienic feeding or cigarette abuse. Tooth decay, to a lesser extent, is also often responsible for throat infections. Ginger tea is very effective in alleviating these ailments. To prepare it you will need some ginger slices, peel them and boil them with water. To finish, I recommend adding honey or lemon. By doing this, you will enhance its effects.

Tonsillitis - Elder.

The elder is considered to be the plant that has no waste. Its many healing properties help, among other things, against constipation, and to deflate joints and prevent the accumulation of liquids. In this case, considering its effectiveness as a treatment for these conditions, it is a great ally to overcome tonsillitis.

How to prepare it?

An infusion of 20g of flowers or leaves, or boiling its bark and roots in a liter of water is excellent for throat-related

conditions. This flower tea also has a significant effect to relieve all symptoms related to the common cold.

Anemia - Fennel.

Anemia is, by definition, “a condition in which the body does not have enough healthy red blood cells.” Red blood cells supply oxygen to body tissues. Phytotherapy also offers a therapeutic option to treat it. It is fennel. Boiling its seeds, mixed with sugar, is beneficial to treat this disease. For the preparation of fennel tea you will only need:

1. 30 grams of fennel leaves.
2. 1 liter of water.

How to prepare it?

As in most cases, the first step is to boil the water. When it is boiling, add the fennel leaves. Then let the water and leaves boil for 10 more minutes and then you will have a wonderful infusion for anemia because it provides a progressive increase in iron levels.

Arthritis - Dandelion.

As you know, dandelion is a medicinal plant with many possible uses. What is really amazing about this plant is that it can help treat inconveniences in the digestive system but also to relieve symptoms of the common cold. One of its most significant uses in terms of relevance and levels of effectiveness is related to arthritis and rheumatism. The dandelion fights the uric acid; it is recommended to take at least three daily cups of infusion of its leaves and to annex onion or parsley salad. This plant can be ingested in many ways; however, the most effective for the treatment of arthritis is its infusion. To prepare it you need:

1. Dandelion leaves.

2. Coconut water.

How to prepare it?

It is so simple that you will not believe what you read here. To prepare an infusion of dandelion you must place the leaves in the blender. Then add the coconut water to the same bowl and proceed to whisk. The leaves of this plant have a bitter taste, so I recommend you to add to the mix something like apple juice or ginger to liven up its flavor. Drinking it three times a day is the right dosage.

Suffocation – Jasmine.

This very popular and effective medicinal plant for various common diseases comes from Southeast Asia. Throughout the last decades, with the emphasis of the research sciences in relation to the healing properties of certain medicinal plants, it has been determined that this plant offers us many significant advantages. First, it relieves tension and stress; it also regulates the level of cholesterol in our body; it facilitates the development of certain beneficial bacteria and some people even use it to lose weight. However, the infusion of its flowers and boiling its roots is effective for suffocation as a respiratory ailment.

In this regard, you will need:

1. Dried flowers of jasmine bud.
2. Green tea.

How to prepare it?

The first thing, as in most cases, is to heat a bowl of water until it boils. Once the boiling point is reached, add a handful of dried flowers and a teaspoon of green tea. Finally, let the mixture settle for about 5 minutes. From this moment you can drink your jasmine tea and improve the discomfort inherent in asphyxiation.

Bronchitis - Fig

Fig leaf tea (Ficus carica) is recognized as a very good ally in the fight against many common diseases. This tree, from Asia Minor, is especially popular in European countries. Some of the main components of this plant are: fiber, carbohydrates, enzymes, minerals, vitamins and flavonoids. All studies on the fig tree have concluded that its properties lead to improvements in conditions such as calluses, warts and constipation. But, of all these, its infusion stands out especially, which is highly recommended to treat bronchitis.

You will need:

1. 30 grams of fresh figs crumbled.
2. Half a liter of water.

Fig infusion is very effective in treating many of the simple respiratory conditions, especially bronchitis.

Aphonia - Hedge mustard (singer's plant)

The singer's plant was used several centuries ago for the same reasons I'll mention today. It is said that during the Middle Ages, King Louis XIV used different forms of these herbs to regain voice or, in a similar case, to treat aphonia. The way of administration that I recommend is the infusion, first for its flavor and then because its effectiveness has been proven. For this, you will need some water and dried herbs from this plant.

To prepare an infusion you must put a tablespoon of dried leaves of the singer's plant in a cup with boiling water. Ideally, allow the mixture to sit for about 20 minutes. The dosage recommended by different specialists is 3 times a day just after each meal.

Stomach pain - Sweet flag

Another of the wonderful plants recognized for its healing properties, sweet flag is one of the best therapeutic options to treat stomach pains. Preparing this home remedy is quite simple and will be of great use to face those uncomfortable discomforts that do not even let us fall asleep. First, you should deposit a spoonful of sweet flag roots in a small cup. Then add cold water to the cup and let it soak for the next 12 hours. Then you have to heat and filter the infusion. The indications related to this remedy dictate that you should take a sip of this infusion before and after each meal.

Pulmonary ailments - Coltsfoot.

This yellow flowering plant, also known as tussilago, is the secret weapon to relieve lung pains. The syrup of this plant is one of those remedies that should not be missing in any house. The good news is that preparing this syrup is so simple you won't believe it. To begin, place a small handful of coltsfoot leaves in a container (preferably glass). The leaves must be washed. Next thing you have to do is put layers of sugar on top, enough to fill the container. For Mother Nature to do the rest, you will need to seal the bottle tightly so that oxygen particles from the outside won't alter the mixture. From now on, here comes the best part.

The next step is to enclose the container in a small wooden box and bury it in some place in the garden. Make sure you don't bury it so deep or so close to the surface. The idea is that the homogeneous heat of the soil will take care of the fermentation. Eight weeks later, unearth the bottle. You'll have to boil the formed syrup after eight weeks. A daily teaspoon of this syrup will help relieve lung ailments, I assure you.

Inflammation of the throat - Agrimony.

Widely known for its essential oils, alkaloids and ursolic acids, Agrimony is also one of the most widely used plants

to treat inflammation of the throat. Its anti-inflammatory and astringent properties make this herb an unbeatable formula for anyone who is burdened by the ailments inherent in an inflamed throat. This home remedy can be prepared with very few elements. Just deposit a small tablespoon of agrimony in a cup. Then add hot water and let it rest for a minute. It is filtered and, from that moment, gargle with this infusion twice a day.

Biliary ailments - Annual nettle.

Along with dandelion and chicory, annual nettle is the quintessential home remedy for those with stomach problems or diseases, especially those with biliary characteristics. The good news is that there is a plant-based home remedy, very effective for treating both these ailments and biliary conditions. To create this annual nettle cure, a teaspoon full of annual nettle is placed in a standard-sized bowl. The procedure, in this case, is very similar to the one mentioned for the creation of the infusion of agrimony. The last two steps are: add hot water to the bowl where the annual nettle rests; let it rest for two minutes and filter it. The recommendation is to drink it by sips without these, in sum, exceeding 3 cups a day.

Leveling blood sugar - Garlic.

Garlic has many uses. Today, its monopoly in the world of medicinal plants is virtually unquestionable. In addition, its uses in the culinary arts make garlic one of the most popular herbs in the world. However, it has shown great efficacy as a home remedy to level blood sugar. To reduce these levels, apply fermented cabbage juice, garlic cloves and onion; tender carrots, celery or fresh cucumber juice. The combination of these elements is helpful in leveling blood sugar. Remember that garlic is indicated in abnormalities of blood pressure, lack of appetite, bronchitis,

rheumatism, among other conditions. Its inclusion in the daily diet is clearly a success.

Skin rash – Marigold.

This is a plant that, ultimately, is wonderful as a treatment to relieve those uncomfortable and annoying skin rashes. The use of this plant is summarized to skin conditions such as eczema, dermatitis, herpes, and fungi, among others. However, its effectiveness as a laxative and purgative has also been confirmed. Preparing the great marigold ointment requires nothing but interest and desire to be cautious.

Let’s start: you will have to heat 250 grams of pork fat in a pan. To this, add two handfuls of marigold, including its leaves, stem and flowers. Wait for the froth; then shake vigorously and remove the pan from the kitchen. Then cover the pan and let it cool for 12 hours. The next day, you will have to heat the pan again; transfer the content to a cloth and squeeze the elements, all of them. The flowers, stem and leaves. This resulting mass should be passed to a container that can be kept closed. That way, you’ll have the marigold ointment for skin rashes.

Sciatica - Full annual nettle bath.

Let’s face it, who hasn’t felt like they’re dying from one of those awful sciatica pains? If you are one of the lucky ones who has never suffered this, then be cautious and pay attention to this home remedy that has saved me many times. It is the full bath of annual nettle. It is not difficult at all to prepare this bath. First, find a bowl where to deposit 200 grams of annual nettle; then add cold water and let it rest for 12 hours. Remember. Let the nettle and water rest, nothing else. Then you must heat the cold extract and filter it. To finish, you will have to pour this bowl into a bathtub. The duration of full annual nettle baths shall not exceed 20

minutes. The particularity of these baths is that the person should not get dress at the end of this. On the contrary, you should lie in bed with your towel and sweat for an hour. The improvement will be significant within a few days.

Headaches - Ribwort plantain.

You should not necessarily prepare home remedies for major conditions or very complex pathologies. Headaches are the order of the day. Many times they are the result of a busy day of professional work or after spending a whole day taking care of your children. Whatever your case may be, it is advisable to have some options to remedy these pains that, when they arrive, can even interrupt our rest. Compresses and ribwort plantain are my recommendation. The patient should put warm compresses on his feet while taking delicious ribwort plantain juice. Some people add a bit of lemon to this formula. In the end, you will have a good time with the compress on your forehead and the discomfort will go away.

Open wounds - Celandine.

Celandine juice was one of the first home remedies I knew, and it was, of course, when I was a kid. This plant, also known as pilewort, fig buttercup or woods-poppy, has a set of healing properties that can be of great help. First, it is used for hepatobiliary conditions because of its cholagogue, spasmolytic and sedative properties. It is also applied as a blood purifier, to treat warts, among others. But its importance, in my opinion, depends on its effectiveness in the treatment of open wounds. I am referring to celandine juice. Don’t worry, nothing is as simple as preparing this remedy.

First: wash its leaves, stem and flowers. While still fresh, squeeze them. Once squeezed, proceed to wash the edges

of the wound. This is a treatment that comes accompanied by the marigold ointment.

Skin conditions - Chamomile poultice.

Skin rashes can be alleviated thanks to one of the many protagonists of Mother Nature: chamomile. In this specific case, I will refer to the creation of a chamomile poultice to treat all these skin discomfort. Preparing a poultice is not complicated. A spoonful of chamomile should be mixed with a quarter of a liter of boiling milk. Then, let the mixture rest for a couple of minutes, strain and let cool. Then, take a clean cloth and impregnate it with warm milk. Finally, place the poultice on the part of the skin that is affected.

Bruises – St. John's wort oil.

Also known as hypericum perforatum, this plant can be very useful for treating bruises and hematomas. In this sense, I recommend the preparation of a simple home remedy to have in your medicine kit if necessary. St. John's wort oil; how is it prepared? So simple that it is hard to believe! The first thing you have to do is filling a jar with flowers and buds from the newly collected herb. Then, pour oil over the content of the bottle until it is covered. Then let this jar rest, closed, for three weeks in a warm place. You will know that the oil is ready when you notice it turning reddish. If you need it, rub the affected area with this oil several times a day.

Bronchial catarrh - Comfrey.

Although comfrey has taken special fame for its anti-inflammatory properties and for its use in the field of dermatological diseases, it is also very effective for bronchial catarrh. Various studies have allowed us to understand that this medicinal plant cannot be used by people with hypersensitivity, while pregnant or in lactation stage. Now, you're probably wondering what kind of home

remedy you can do to treat bronchial catarrh. First thing: two teaspoons filled with comfrey roots. Here, I must warn you that the remedy will only be useful if the roots have been millimetrically chopped. Then, you have to soak them in cold water for at least 12 hours. The last steps to having a great catarrh remedy are to warm it up again, filter it and sip it. You should not exceed 4 cups a day.

Puncture wounds - Arnica essence.

One of the medicinal plants that you cannot miss in your first aid kit is arnica. Now, have you ever thought about how you prepare arnica essence? This remedy is essential to treat blows, bruises, hematomas and puncture wounds. For its preparation you must, as a first step, fill two thirds of a jar with arnica petals torn directly from the green calyx. Then pour wheat alcohol (40% concentration) into the jar until the container is full. From now on, leave the bottle in a warm place, resting, for at least two weeks. You should filter the content of the bottle; some will be in contact with the petals. After the first emptying, you should fill the container with alcohol.

Digestive problems - Walnut.

Walnut is another great option to treat digestive inconveniences, especially constipation and stomach pains. Preparing a home remedy with this plant is as simple as incredible. A heaping tablespoon of walnut leaves comes first; then, place the content in a cup and add hot water. To ensure the union of the elements, let it rest for a couple of minutes. The next step is to filter the drink. I recommend, for greater effectiveness of the remedy, that you consume it by sips. Ideally, you should drink a maximum of two cups

with this infusion a day. I guarantee you'll feel better than ever.

Dislocations - Creeping thyme.

I recommend this medicinal plant to treat dislocations. Its properties and compounds make this a great option for simple dislocations. The recommendation itself is for you to rub the dislocations superficially with creeping thyme oil. To prepare this oil, just fill a jar with creeping thyme leaves and pour oil into the jar until the leaves are completely covered. Then, let it rest for three weeks. Make sure to place the bottle in a warm place. There are no contraindications as to its use. You can apply the oil to the dislocation as many times as you consider necessary for your healing.

Burns - Butterbur.

This plant is especially effective to treat burns or any other type of wound that stings; its effectiveness in the treatment of ulcers has also been endorsed. Now, creating an herbal dressing is not complicated at all. Try to wash the leaves of the plant very well. Then, you must crush them with a rolling pin on a wooden surface. The paste resulting from this process is applied directly to the wound in question. To guarantee the result, the dressing should be applied several times a day. During this process, the wound can only be washed with boiled water that is already cold.

Sore tongue – Lady's bedstraw .

It has happened to all of us, we sometimes wound ourselves after eating some food that is too hot. All these wounds, swelling, pain or burns are cured with tender lady's bedstraw, another clear example of a 100% effective medicinal plant. For this home remedy you will need 6 cups of finely chopped lady's bedstraw infusion. You should

deposit a teaspoon of lady’s bedstraw in a cup and then add hot water. As with most infusions, let it rest for two or three minutes. Then filter it and fill a portion for the day. The way of administration for this remedy is like rinsing. Yes, to eliminate this pain in your mouth you will have to rinse and gargle several times a day with this infusion. The treatment should be maintained until the condition is gone.

Purify the blood - Burdock.

The burdock root infusion is the best natural blood purifier. The patient should take milk as a light laxative and start with the infusion on the next night; a teaspoon of root powder for every cup of hot water is taken daily and thus begins to purify the blood. Other herbs that help to purify the blood are: saffron, sandalwood powder, turmeric, sweet flag root. Red pomegranate juice, orange juice and asparagus root are also good options. Toxins can also be neutralized with hot, spicy herbs such as ginger and black pepper. Hunger, thirst, exercise, sunbathing, fresh air are other means of neutralizing toxins.

Purify the blood - Shrubby gromwell.

Another great option to purify the blood is, precisely, shrubby gromwell. Toxins that are absorbed by the bloodstream through the digestive system circulate through the body and give rise to diseases that are difficult to treat, usually in the joints and skin. In these cases, it is necessary to remove toxins and purify the blood. Shrubby gromwell is one of the best options, in addition, for frequent attacks of skin diseases (hives, acne, and scabies). Shrubby gromwell stimulates the production of toxins in the blood; toxins that help strengthen the immune system.

This treatment is not recommended for children and the elderly; excess sugar, salt, and yogurt are toxic to the blood.

Gonorrhea - Herbs to support its treatment.

Gonorrhea is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases today. In this disease, the patient has significant and complex symptoms, such as: abundant urethral discharge, chronic pain during urination and burning in the genital parts. Here are some herbs that work to strengthen official treatment against this venereal disease:

- Bellyache bush: infusion of leaves and bark from the bellyache bush. Oral consumption.
- Smilax: infusion of the root of the plant. Oral consumption. This plant also works to support the treatment of syphilis.
- Red cinchona: boiling its root and bark. It is mainly applied to syphilitic chancre.

Laryngitis - Common mallow.

To prepare this home remedy, the first thing you need to do is to deposit a spoonful of common mallow in a cup. Then add cold water to fill the cup and then let it rest for 12 hours. Once this resting time is over, heat and filter the liquid. The recommended dosage is two or three cups of this infusion per day. To make your job easier, I suggest you fill a thermos with the content of the daily serving. Thus you will have scheduled the days and successive takes for the treatment to have a positive effect.

Laxative - Castor oil plant.

Castor oil is a laxative soft enough to give to babies. To treat a baby, the mother must dip the little finger in the oil and let the baby suck it. For chronic constipation, take a tablespoon of castor oil with a cup of ginger tea. This tonic will neutralize the toxins and relieve the gases. Another very valid option is its root tea, which has been shown to be effective in ailments such as arthritis, sciatica and gout. In other words, the castor oil plant should not be lacking in your small garden. Its properties are extraordinary.

It is important to know that purgatives should not be given to people who find themselves with fever, diarrhea, flu, bleeding from the rectum, bleeding from the lung cavities, external tumors in the stomach or in cases of emaciation due to general weakness.

Starting with...

10 quick recommendations for the most common diseases.

1. Acne: Apply a sandalwood powder paste with enough water. Drink half a cup of sandalwood juice twice a day until it heals.
2. Menstrual cramps: Take 1 tablespoon of aloe juice with two pinches of black pepper three times a day until the colic wears off.
3. External pain: apply ginger pads. To prepare: combine 2 tablespoons of ginger powder with turmeric and add enough water so that the mixture acquires the consistency of a paste. Heat the paste and spread it over a cotton cloth, then place the cloth over the affected area. Keep it overnight.
4. Burning eyes: Put three drops of rose water in the affected eye.
5. Poisonous bites and stings: Drink cilantro juice or apply sandalwood paste to the affected area.
6. Diarrhea: blend equal parts of water and yogurt. Add ginger, 1/8 tablespoon. You can also drink coffee with lemon juice.
7. Indigestion: Eat a clove of garlic with a pinch of salt and a pinch of baking soda.
8. Sinusitis: Inhale a pinch of sweet flag root powder.
9. Constipation: drink senna leaves tea.

10. Common cold: one tablespoon of ginger or blue gum powder in a liter of water. Inhale the steam.
11. Apply steam baths in case of skin diseases, among others. This is one of the most important treatments of naturism which purpose is the expulsion of toxins and other harmful substances inside the body through the skin. This is possible thanks to the action of steam that, by stimulating perspiration, allows the various harmful substances circulating in the blood to be eliminated with sweat. This purifying property is excellent for the treatment of rheumatism, kidneys, arthritis, uric acid, obesity, skin diseases, colds, respiratory tract, alcoholism and venereal diseases. There are several ways or forms of steam bath: Turkish, saunas, etc.

Action is the key

One of the reasons I made the decision to prepare this book was, of course, to offer you some tools and recommendations so that you can understand how important the plant kingdom is in terms of health and well-being. The pharmaceutical industry’s boom has been significant since its inception, but its commercial focus does not include space for medicinal plants. Have you ever wondered why? Maybe one of the reasons is related to the impossibility of patenting all those resources that Mother Nature has provided us since the beginning of the world. Now, regardless of these reasons, life goes on, right? When the priority is to maintain optimal health, all the resources we have on hand are needed. In this sense, the plant kingdom could not be an exception.

What I’m trying to tell you with all this is that meeting this goal that I have set for each of my readers goes far beyond offering theoretical aspects. Knowledge is good, it is a weapon of great value, but it is meaningless when we cannot take it into action. For example, what good would it have been for scientists to establish all the calculations needed for that first trip to the moon if, at the time, all this information had been left on a computer or on a confidential server? All major changes in life come with a mixture of attitude and aptitude. Knowledge is necessary, of course, but it’s more necessary to take specific actions to improve your current situation.

The importance of this chapter lies in its pragmatic capacity. From now on you will have at your disposal all these recommendations, in the form of recipes, so that you can prepare all the home remedies you deem necessary to protect your health from the common diseases to which we are constantly exposed by various factors. Common colds, problems with your stomach and respiratory system, and fever. All these problems of the human body are frequent. So, as you will have noticed, it is advisable to take all the necessary precautions so that we have remedies of plant origin to alleviate such symptoms.

The time for action is, here, the task. Now, you do not need to go to the center of the Amazon to find these medicinal plants, nor should you visit India. While it is true that synthetic drugs that are mass-produced in large pharmaceutical laboratories are the common denominator in drugstores, there are many commercial options for you to get the therapeutic herbs mentioned throughout this chapter. The origin of each of these plants, and where to find them, will be dealt with in depth in the next chapter. For now, I invite you to continue to accumulate knowledge and put it in practice. Now you have all the tools to prepare

home remedies of high quality and therapeutic efficiency. Do not forget that your well-being is the priority, so the information herein referred must be treated with great attention.

Why go out at midnight and go halfway around town to get to the nearest drugstore just to get some medicine? Or, put another way, why risk stuffing yourself with drugs that, in exchange for mitigating the symptoms of a certain disease, cause you to become dependent? Don’t forget what I told you a few chapters ago: our well-being is the reflection of our actions and behavior. Mother Nature offers us therapeutic options outside of this high risk of feeding a drug dependency. This is one of the reasons why I have opted for medicinal plants as a way of life to the detriment of these pharmaceutical drugs composed from nothing. This is the path I have chosen, and I personally cherish the certainty that, from now on, you and I will be companions on this wonderful journey through the resources of Mother Nature.

Chapter 5

Where did plants originally come from and where to get them?

The best way to understand what happens in our present is to identify what happened in our past. This is the premise of the chapter that you will read below. Where did medicinal plants originally come from? This question, likewise, contains many of the answers that will help us today to better understand the functioning of the current pharmaceutical industry and, ultimately, the role that medicinal plants have played in all the processes of modernization of the medical sciences. The purpose of this chapter is to learn a little more about those resources that the earth provides through its plant kingdom.

Have you ever wondered where those plants that you've been meeting throughout this book come from? As is well known, many of these herbs come from Asia, that huge continent abundant in Eastern wisdom and mysticism rare in the Western world. As an individual, I have a hard time assimilating something (anything) if I haven't been able to identify the origin of that thing. The same thing happens to me when I plant them. In fact, many of the certainties about this wonderful world that I harbor today were born from understanding its origins.

For researchers in all related areas, discovering new medicinal herbs is a challenge of unsuspected levels. It makes sense if you think about it. Taking a look at a world map for a few seconds is enough to know that the planet is as vast as immeasurable. We may never know 100% of the plant species on the planet. However, it seems to me a valid exercise to go deeper into the place from which the species

that we know today come from. The sciences responsible for offering us therapeutic options know that it is practically impossible to study all of these plants, but they do not stop trying. Every day brings with it a set of investigations that seek, in this sense, to discover new possibilities to be included in the world of medicines. I think it is appropriate, then, to thank those who constantly devote all their resources to this search. From a practical point of view, all the contributions are necessary when it comes to the welfare of all living beings.

Jorge Ruben Alonso refers to this aspect in the following terms:

> Bearing in mind the limited knowledge of the species that inhabit the planet and the high population demand for them, we understand that there is a long way to go and many medicines that remain to be discovered, to ensure that the man has the quality of life he deserves. To achieve this objective, the systematic study of medicinal plants must be approached from a multidisciplinary point of view, inviting all those sciences integrated into the study of life and man to participate: anthropology, biology, biotechnology, botany, ecology, ethnomedicine, pharmacology, toxicology, etc. Novel drugs or plant drugs of importance to man may be obtained from the contribution of each of these disciplines.

The idea of all the great sciences united in a common goal, the well-being of human beings, is encouraging.

On the other hand, elements of the capacity to satisfy demand come into play. Put another way: the options that each individual has at their mercy to be able to acquire all these natural products and their healing properties. It is clear that, especially in recent decades, the rise of natural medicine has gained a lot of strength. Increasing demand has meant considerable progress in the context of a globalized world. This is another topic to be covered in this

chapter. If you want to know a little more about all these options, I invite you to continue reading.

Where can you buy your medicinal herbs?

With regard to the world of natural medicine, people today have a significant number of options to acquire them. It is clear that this is an exclusive reality of the present, precisely because we are at the epicenter of an unusual growth. The demand for medicinal plants has become more than relevant in commercial terms. As I have mentioned in previous segments, all health markets have had to open up space for the number of new adherents who seek in medicinal plants a more natural and appropriate option to treat common diseases.

This is relatively new. Two decades ago, the very idea of walking into a large drugstore and spending hours searching in a aisle dedicated solely to the healing products of the plant kingdom was unthinkable. Today circumstances have changed. A clear demonstration of this is the large number of naturist shops that proliferate in all the cities of the world, not limited to the space that the drugstores offer them in their respective aisle. This, however, has been a long struggle that has gone on for decades. Overcoming stigmatization, for example, has been a challenge of biblical proportions for those who claim the usefulness of medicinal plants as valid and totally reasonable therapeutic options.

Fortunately, all these struggles have ended up giving us a palpable result, which can be seen day after day with the number of possibilities that exist in the market to provide us with the medicinal plants that Mother Nature has provided us. Just visit any shopping center to come across some stores specializing in the marketing of this type of products. Another noticeable result in the natural medicine revolution is the variety of options. Products made in mass, with very

high quality standards, made available to those who have taken a radical turn in their lifestyles, preferring to opt for treatments from the plant, animal or mineral kingdom. In other words, of strictly natural origin.

You would be surprised to know the wide variety of medicines, and their various forms, that you can buy at almost any point of sale. A bottle of capsules composed of cascara buckthorn and pineapple powder for control of the body weight; others which composition is powder of horsetail root, chamomile and celery to take as a natural diuretic. In short, there are golden times ahead for those who opted for a lifestyle conceived from the nature.

If you are looking for plants for culinary use, such as coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) or asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*), any supermarket or mini-market will be a great help. These types of plants are usually processed and packaged in such a way that the prospective buyer will not even have to clean the product before using it. This can be an advantage if you have little time to cook your daily dishes; if on the contrary, you can spend some time cooking, then you must go to another type of establishment where you can buy the plants only for their subsequent cultivation. Whatever your intention may be, the choices are out there. Personally, I think both options are equally valid. It is good to consider the personal conditions of each individual. One cannot require someone with a very heavy work schedule to choose to grow their own medicinal plants, when this, in turn, means much more time in preparation.

Generally, any nursery has a selection of medicinal herbs for sale to the consumer. In this type of commercial establishments you will find not only culinary herbs but those medicinal plants you need to prepare your home remedies or, failing that, to prepare a small medicine cabinet to have at home to face eventualities. There are

also specialized nurseries dedicated exclusively to the retail sale of natural medicines. This type of business offers, in most cases, processed medicines and plants ready to be grown in the comfort of your home.

These specialty stores are known as herbalists. The good thing about this option is that the entire inventory and the collaborators are one hundred percent in tune with their consumers. Of course, many times curious people, who just want to make some time, go there. But, generally, their owners or employees have a high level of knowledge to provide all the advice that the client requires. This is one of the best recommendations; there you will find herbs for medicinal preparations and a lot of natural products for various purposes.

Another good option is the digital world. The world of e-commerce has grown exponentially in recent years. The new technologies and the entrepreneurial mentality of a significant number of people have led to a partial transfer of businesses to the electronic world. At present, there are many enterprises engaged in the marketing of different products and services. I refer to products and services of any kind, from website programming services to the sale of ancient relics. This reality is not alien to the world of natural medicine. A simple search in Google will take you to endless digital ventures that base their sales strategies on the use of social networks and the positioning of their brands as living businesses. So, if you don’t have too much time to walk the streets of your city in search of a specialized nursery, this is your best option.

In conclusion, once you make the decision to provide yourself with the wonders offered by Mother Nature, you can do so through multiple options. My suggestion is for you to make the most of the booming trade in medicinal plants. Either after a long Sunday walk or after several minutes in

the nooks and crannies of the internet. Regardless of your method, this is an ideal time for you to start creating your own home remedies.

Where do medicinal plants come from?

Have you ever wondered about the origin of that medicinal plant that has gotten you out of so much trouble? Where does that herb that you drink in tea to relieve sore throats or stomach pains grow? These questions pose a challenge that transcends all of us because of the vastness of our home, planet Earth. It is practically impossible to determine the origin of a medicinal plant precisely. Scientists, historians and archaeologists base their statements on a few traces or evidences. A lot of times they're right, I'm sure they are, but how much certainty can we have when it comes to such a monstrously large place?

Taking into account the above mentioned (that the planet and its vastness is, a priori, ungraspable), I chose some medicinal plants at random to tell you about their origins, where they come from and what their characteristics are. The herbs examined below represent an insignificant sample in quantitative terms, but who doesn't like to learn something new? This is the purpose of this chapter, to strengthen your training to change your lifestyle.

Mallow

Common mallow (*Malva sylvestris L.*), known in some places as cheeses or high mallow, is a flowering plant composed, in essence, of mucilage and anthocyanosides. This plant is used, internally, to treat constipation and bronchitis. However, in its external use, it serves for the treatment of stomatitis, glossitis, pharyngitis and dermatosis. In general, its use is recommended in many conditions related to the digestive system. At least 30 species of the Malvaceae family are known today. All studies

relate this plant to a habitat of temperate climates; specifically: different regions of Asia, Africa and some specific places in Europe.

The first sighting of this plant was, according to research, in temperate areas of Asia, Africa and Europe. Fortunately, the export and mass transfer activities have led the mallow to be cultivated in different latitudes. While it is true that its habitat is in the above-mentioned regions, its cultivation has spread to places as remote as Iceland. Latin America has also been one of its new places as a result of constant export efforts.

Sage

This plant, needless to say, is one of the most complete medicinal herbs in the great inventory of natural medicine. Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) belongs to the great family of labiatae; it is composed of various essential oils, diterpenoids, flavonoids and phenolic acids. Its therapeutic and pharmacological properties are: anti-inflammatory, cicatrizant, choleretic, spasmolytic, antiseptic, hypoglycemic. As for the common use of these plants, these stand out: dyspepsia, diarrhea, flatulence and diabetes. In relation to its wonderful healing properties, Dioscorides wrote: Why should a man die whilst sage grows in his garden?

Now, do you have any idea of the origin of sage? Or what is its habitat? It has been determined that this plant is mainly cultivated in subtropical or tropical environments. Although there are about 500 different species of this plant, the habitat of this plant is found throughout the Mediterranean areas and the Iberian Peninsula. Northern Morocco is the most suitable place, however, they can also be found in Italy and Greece. This plant is characterized by appearing leafy in

open spaces, regardless of the care of any crop, growing even in limestone soils or in stony places.

It is believed that sage was used by the ancient Egyptians, as detailed in Ebers' Papyrus (1500 BC), a document mentioned in the first chapter of this book, where he delved into the history of medicinal plants.

Dandelion

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is composed of resin, carbohydrates, flavonoids, tannins, mucilage, coumarin, potassium salts, among other elements. As has been well mentioned in this book, its healing properties are: choleretic, diuretic, mild laxative and eupeptic. It has also been shown to be effective in treating common myocardial-related diseases. It is usually used to treat hepatobiliary dyskinesia, dyspepsia and constipation. Its properties are also used to improve the conditions of patients diagnosed with biliary obstruction and lithiasis. To date, there is no solid documentation of its origins. It was not until 1546 that Jacob Dietrich realized his effectiveness for "stomach warming".

As for its habitat, it is known that dandelion grows in temperate areas, at an altitude of 2000 meters. Unlike other plants, it can be cultivated and used as a vegetable. That is, as an additional element in salads and similar dishes. In addition, this plant can easily grow in fertile meadows and forests.

Alder buckthorn

Alder buckthorn (Rhamnus frangula L.), also known as glossy or breaking buckthorn, is a plant which potential is mainly found in its dried bark of stems and in its branches. This rich medicinal plant is composed of: Oxidized hydroxyanthraquinone, sugar and hydroxyanthraquinone derivatives. Its properties make this plant an unbeatable

option for the treatment of intestinal cramps, constipation and for the cleaning of the digestive tract. However, there have been adverse effects in pregnant people or people with some intestinal obstruction. One of its main characteristics is that it can be applied in different ways: through dripping, such as dust, dyeing and decoction.

The first reference about alder buckthorn came from the German botanist Hieronymus Bock, who identified its purgative effects for one of the earliest editions of his treatise De Stirpium libri.

This leafy shrub, with small flowers and greenish calyx, blooms from April to July. It mainly grows on the banks of streams or in areas of Europe characterized by a temperate or humid climate. Unfortunately, its cultivation is not very common. In essence, it is a species that grows faster in the open of nature, so its cultivation seems more an impossibility.

Arnica

Arnica (Arnica montana L.) is another of those medicinal plants that shine by its popularity gained throughout history. It is very difficult to find a first aid kit or a medicine box that does not contain arnica inside, in any of its different versions. This flowering plant, which grows from June to August, is composed of essential oils, sesquiterpenic lactones, coumarins, faradiol and flavonic glycosides. Its antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties have made this plant one of the best natural options to treat bruises, bumps, contusions or sprains. It can be used topically or consumed as capsules.

As to their origin, ancient physicians record their effectiveness with great enthusiasm. By 1558, in the Matthiolus treatise, it is one of the oldest certified records. The first findings of this plant place us in places as remote

as Croatia, Portugal or Italy. In addition, it has been confirmed that this plant grows fluidly in humid and mountainous soils. Places like Russia or Central Asia are ideal for the correct cultivation of Arnica. A fact that should not be overlooked is that this plant is currently classified as one of the herbs in danger of extinction due to the massive collection in search of its medicinal properties.

Artichoke

This plant is also known as globe artichoke. The basis of its properties is found in its leaves. The artichoke is composed of three essential elements: mucilage, triterpenic alcohols (taraxasterol), cynaropicrin, polyphenols (cynarine, caffeic acid, and chlorogenic acid), flavonoids (cyanide, scilliroside), and enzymes (ascorbinase). Because of its choleretic and diuretic properties, the artichoke is used to treat dyspepsia and hepatobiliary dyskinesia. It can be administered in drops, tinctures, infusions and capsules.

It is one of the oldest plants of the list. Its origins go back to the ancient Roman and Egyptian empires. It is believed to originate in Ethiopia. However, southern Europe has now been identified as its suitable habitat. As a bonus, I'll tell you that this plant blooms between July and August. The good news is that, due to the massive exports of its properties, it is now cultivated in many Latin American countries and in the United States of America. Sunny places are the perfect sauce for the cultivation and fluid growth of this wonderful plant which name, coming from the Arabic, means "edible plant".

Angelica

"Angelica, with its virtues and wonderful qualities, is a plant and a healing root that seems to have been given to the human being by the Holy Spirit or by the good angels," as Tabemae Montanus referred to this plant in 1588. He

recommended, in turn, the use of this plant for the stinking air of hospitals. This beautiful plant, belonging to the family of umbelliferae, is composed of: mineral salts, sugars, organic acids (angelic, succinic, malic, acetic, oxalic), chlorogenic acid, caffeic acid, coumarins (ostol, ostenol, angelicin, bergapten, umbelliferone) and essential oils. Its healing, sedative, diuretic and expectorant properties make Angelica (Angelica archangelica L.) a wonderful option to treat bumps, sprains or ulcers. In addition, it is used as an appetite stimulant for anorexia and meteorism.

Angelica grows faithfully in temperate and humid areas. Asia and Iceland are the places where its cultivation grows most easily. However, significant crops have been found as far away as Switzerland or Austria. The northern Baltic Sea groups this plant into its wildest states.

A golden recommendation to make your life even better.

The fact that medicinal plants have been used since the very beginning of life is an unquestionable reality. The need for food, to relieve pain and suffering, were the basis for their inclusion in daily life. The number of historical records that refer to the existence and use of these plants in years far away from our present represent, beyond a historical value, scientific evidence of unusual transcendence. All people, consciously or unconsciously, seek fulfillment, happiness. These two aspects cannot be found when we are in poor health. Hence the importance of recognizing everything related to medicinal plants and the capacity that they have to transform our lives for good.

The 7 plants mentioned above are much more than a sample. These are 7 symbols that come to tell us that there

is a natural world, and that it can offer us the healing and well-being that we have long needed. Closing the doors to medicinal plants because of absurd prejudices is not only a very serious mistake but constitutes irresponsibility towards the same individual, who refuses the opportunity to contemplate new options; many times healthier and more efficient alternatives than all those expensive drugs with which advertising constantly hits us, from dawn to dusk.

As I have structured this chapter for you to know the origin of 7 medicinal plants, and their passage throughout history, I likewise advise you to open your mind to the immensity of Mother Nature, who has provided us with wonders that go far beyond the senses. Landscapes of a dreamlike beauty, the grotesque perfection of the animal world, the immensity of the seas, the great diversity of jungles and forests with their thousands of unknown plant species. All these things I have just mentioned to you are gifts from Mother Nature. Messages that seek to remove the blindfold from our eyes. That is also, in part, my purpose with this chapter and ultimately, with this book.

What do you feel when you walk along a mountain path? What happens inside you when you watch that animal that you have always been passionate about on television? Or, even better, what thoughts crowd your mind when you remember that last walk to the beach and the feeling of being just a tiny drop in the middle of an infinite ocean? The beauty of Mother Nature cannot be measured with exact sciences, because its effect arises from our subjectivities.

Think for a moment about all the therapeutic solutions that exist (and have not been discovered) in the vast jungle areas of the planet. What if that set of jungles, known to some as the lungs of the planet, harbors the solution to such complex diseases as cancer or AIDS? At this moment, I am reminded of that great phrase by the English musician

John Lennon. "You may say I am a dreamer, but I am not the only one".

If there is one thing I am sure of, it is that all the information you have consumed throughout these pages will mark a before and after in your life. Sometimes we just need a little push to make that definitive leap towards a better way of looking at the world. This is not just any leap; it is one that will free you from addictions, which will help you overcome common diseases from a naturist approach. Mother Nature offers us her resources to alleviate our suffering. Best of all, they are at your fingertips. Any small space, even in the middle of a city crowded with people, is conducive for the cultivation of many of the medicinal plants deeply detailed in this book. Home remedies, infusions, baths, teas, tinctures, all these rich alternatives await you. The world is plentiful in every way. And it’s waiting for you.

Conclusion

From the discussion raised in the previous chapters, it is possible to derive the following conclusions regarding the phytotherapy and the use of medicinal plants in specific contexts of the day to day.

Mother Nature, which contains us all on this planet that we share as our only home, has been today and since time immemorial the great provider of solutions of different kinds. Not in vain the animal kingdom and the plant kingdom represented the only possibility for hundreds of generations and civilizations that have had an eventual step in the world. The history of mankind is replete with concise examples, documents in various treatises and philosophical studies, of how medicinal plants have served to relieve pain and heal the diseases that plagued our ancestors. Many of the treatises referred to in the first chapter of this book (*History of Medicinal Plants*) are faithful testimony to this unquestionably truth.

Subsequently, with the modernization of many processes and the emergence of chemistry in the context of pharmacology, doctors had first-hand access to each and every one of the properties that make up those plants that even today feed our well-being and cure us from diseases, both complex and common. This reality, unassailable from any point of view, is the spinal cord of this project. Looking for answers to the problem of health, men and women of different periods came up with precise procedures to isolate particles and properties from plants, thus giving a new approach to what is now known as phytotherapy.

Understanding that life is the priority, it should be noted that all these healing properties have a superlative level of effectiveness; in many cases, such efficiency has been

proven by extensive and complex scientific studies. This means that, as time passes, and contrary to what may be believed, the medical sciences (as we conceive them today) and the natural world have ended up creating solid alliances pursuing a common goal: health. Of course, although science has concluded that medicinal plants have, to a greater or lesser extent, a positive effect on people, there's still some stigmatization. But why is there stigmatization about the plant kingdom being the solution to many of the common diseases that afflict us today? The dynamics of the medical world in recent years have allowed me to come to a rather concrete conclusion: prejudices. There are no scientific reasons to question the efficiency of medicinal plants as therapeutic treatments for some pathologies. So I can assure you, a priori, that stigmatization doesn't make any sense. At least not medically, which is, ultimately, the only approach that can be considered relevant.

The second chapter (*Properties and benefits of medicinal plants*), where I delve into the advantages that plants offer us for the care of our nervous system, the health of our heart, our stomach, among others, serves to reach some conclusions:

a) A significant percentage of drugs now openly marketed in all drugstores around the world are based on active ingredients found in medicinal plants of various types. This implies the need to ask the following question: if the properties found in medicinal plants are a kind of natural placebo, why have large laboratories devoted so many resources to the creation of drugs based on molecules and principles extracted from the plant kingdom? This question also contains an answer that serves as a conclusion: modern medicine implicitly recognizes

the positive effect of medicinal herbs on therapeutic and curative treatments.

b) Drugs now known as anxiolytics are mostly composed of molecules such as *fluoxetine* and *clonazepam* . One of the most common contraindications in this type of medicine is its addictive character. These molecules create dependency in patients who are forced to take them, either to sleep or to calm some chronic ailment. Another of the great conclusions that can be drawn from this book, and from my experience in the world of phytotherapy, is that unlike these drugs, natural plants such as valerian have the same function without sharing the risk of the patient ending up in a drug-dependency situation. Valerian, used as a sedative, hypnotic, and spasmolytic treatment, is a much healthier option than any other drug that ultimately leads to addiction. This is a relevant point of comparison to which little importance has been given in terms of scientific research and dissemination.

c) The growing demand for medicines from the animal kingdom has several possible interpretations. One of them, which will be taken as a partial conclusion here, is that people have begun to trust their well-being in herbs and their healing properties. This new and growing demand has forced drugstores to open up to new products proposed by phytotherapy. As people see for themselves the positive results of medicinal plants, the need to acquire them grows. Hence the emergence of new specialized establishments for the marketing of this type of product on a daily basis.

d) Another of the conclusions drawn around this book is the fact that there is a significant difference in the "accessibility". As I mentioned in the fourth chapter

(*Home remedies with medicinal plants and their recipes*), a person has all the logical facilities to develop his own remedies from the comfort of his home. This makes a significant difference to the drugs offered in drugstores and pharmacies, extending the distance between medicinal plants and medicines of pharmaceutical origin.

These 4 conclusions are only a moderately significant demonstration of all the information contained in the pages of this book. The idea is not to wage a war between synthesized drugs and medicinal plants as therapeutic treatments. Doing so would be a crossroads for the reader and the patient that does not bring any value to their basic needs. It has now been more than proven that human beings are facing a set of diseases and pathologies for which I believe it is important to have all possible options. Just as there are synthetic medicines that provide specific benefits, this also happens in the case of medicinal herbs.

I think it is appropriate to inform that the structure of the book was designed to be user-friendly. In this sense, I propose to the reader that all the information found in this book should be used as a practical guide of references to enter into the plant kingdom. From the first steps of man, Mother Nature has been present to offer us everything we need. The plant, mineral and animal kingdom have been, from the beginning, our most immediate resources to satisfy hunger, to supply us with daily provisions and, as has been referred to, to mitigate pain and disease. By the way, we are fortunate to live in times where the cohesion between Mother Nature and science begins to bear fruit. It is not in vain that pharmacology increasingly recognizes the scope of herbs as medicinal treatments. This is the ideal scenario to change our lifestyles and add, in each day, a little bit of Mother Nature.